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MAYNARD'S
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NATURE

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

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MAYNARD'S ENGLISH CLASSIC SERIES, No. 227

NATURE

BY

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

WITH BIOGRAPHY, CRITICAL OPINIONS, AND EXPLANATORY NOTES

BY

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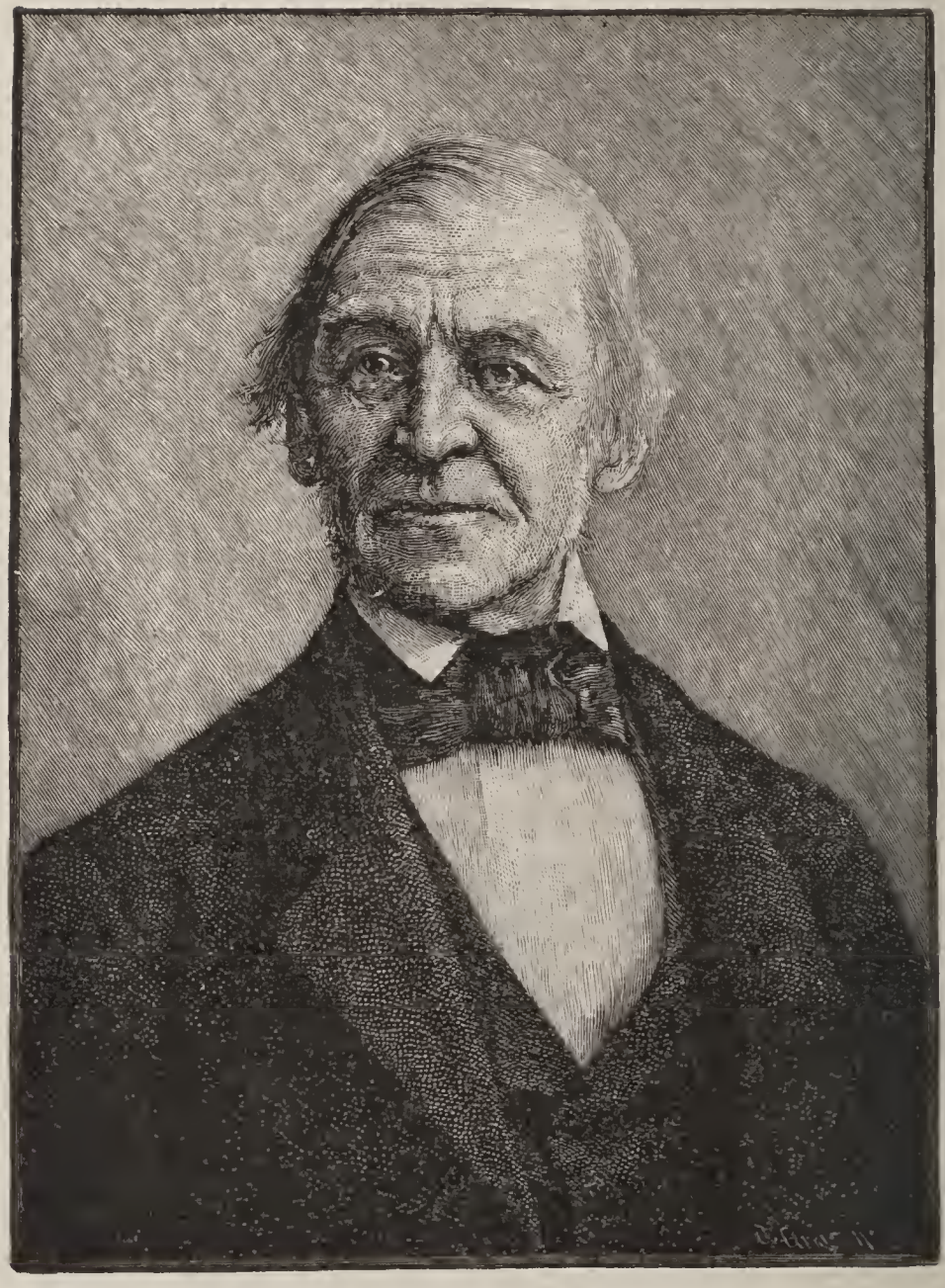

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

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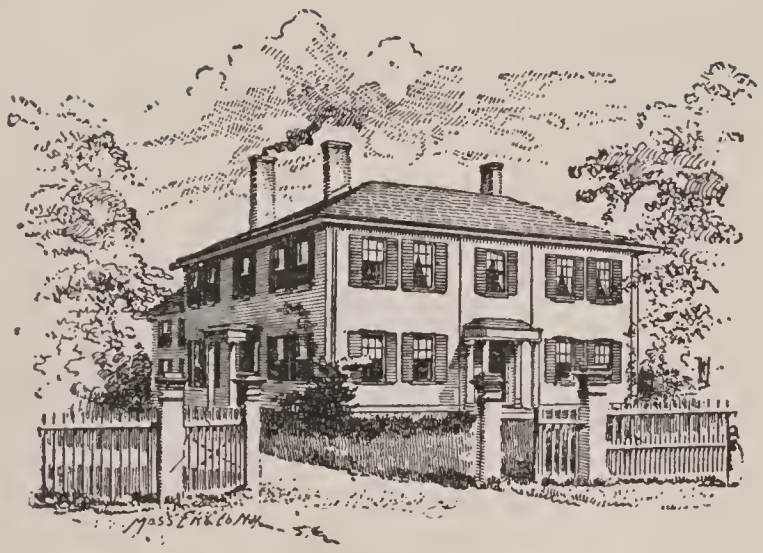
Life of Emerson



HOME OF EMERSON IN CONCORD

Ralph Waldo Emerson was born in Boston, May 25, 1803. He was descended from a long line of New England ministers, men of refinement and education. As a schoolboy he was quiet and retiring, reading a great deal, but not paying much attention to his lessons. He entered Harvard at the early age of fourteen, but never attained a high rank there, although he took a prize for an essay on Socrates, and was made class poet after several others had declined. Next to his reserve and the faultless propriety of his conduct, his contemporaries at college seemed most impressed by the great maturity of his mind. Emerson appears never to have been really a boy. He was always serene and thoughtful, impressing all who knew him with that spirituality which was his most distinguishing characteristic.

After graduating from college he taught school for a time, and then entered the Harvard Divinity School under Dr. Channing, the great Unitarian preacher. Although he was not strong enough to attend all the lectures of the divinity course,

the college authorities deemed the name Emerson sufficient passport to the ministry. He was accordingly "approbated to preach" by the Middlesex Association of Ministers on October 10, 1826. As a preacher, Emerson was interesting, though not particularly original. His talent seems to have been in giving new meaning to the old truths of religion. One of his hearers has said: "In looking back on his preaching I find he has impressed truths to which I always assented in such a manner as to make them appear new, like a clearer revelation." Although his sermons were always couched in scriptural language, they were touched with the light of that genius which avoids the conventional and commonplace. In his other pastoral duties Emerson was not quite so successful. It is characteristic of his deep humanity and his dislike for all fuss and commonplace that he appeared to least advantage at a funeral. A connoisseur in such matters, an old sexton, once remarked that on such occasions "he did not appear at ease at all. To tell the truth, in my opinion, that young man was not born to be a minister."

Emerson did not long remain a minister. In 1832 he preached a sermon in which he announced certain views in regard to the communion service which were disapproved by a large part of his congregation. He found it impossible to continue preaching, and, with the most friendly feelings on both sides, he parted from his congregation.

A few months later (1833) he went to Europe for a short year of travel. While abroad, he visited Walter Savage Landor, Coleridge and Wordsworth, and Thomas Carlyle. This visit to Carlyle was to both men a most interesting experience. They parted feeling that they had much intellectually in common. This belief fostered a sympathy which, by the time they had discovered how different they really were, had grown so strong a habit that they always kept up their intimacy. This year of travel opened Emerson's eyes to many things of which he had previously been ignorant; he had profited by detachment from the concerns of a limited community and an isolated church.

After his return he began to find his true field of activity in

the lecture-hall, and delivered a number of addresses in Boston and its vicinity. While thus coming before the open public on the lecture platform, he was all the time preparing the treatise which was to embody all the quintessential elements of his philosophical doctrine. This was the essay *Nature*, which was published in 1836. By its conception of external Nature as an incarnation of the Divine Mind it struck the fundamental principle of Emerson's religious belief. The essay had a very small circulation at first, though later it became widely known.

In the winter of 1836 Emerson followed up his discourse on Nature by a course of twelve lectures on the "Philosophy of History," a considerable portion of which eventually became embodied in his essays. The next year (1837) was the year of the delivery of the *Man Thinking, or the American Scholar* address before the Phi Beta Kappa Society at Cambridge.

This society, composed of the first twenty-five men in each class graduating from college, has annual meetings which have called forth the best efforts of many distinguished scholars and thinkers. Emerson's address was listened to with the most profound interest. It declared a sort of intellectual independence for America. Henceforth we were to be emancipated from clogging foreign influences, and a national literature was to expand under the fostering care of the Republic.

These two discourses, *Nature* and *The American Scholar*, strike the keynote of Emerson's philosophical, poetical, and moral teachings. In fact he had, as every great teacher has, only a limited number of principles and theories to teach. These principles of life can all be enumerated in twenty words —self-reliance, culture, intellectual and moral independence, the divinity of nature and man, the necessity of labor, and high ideals.

Emerson spent the latter part of his life in lecturing and in literary work. His son, Dr. Edward Emerson, gave an interesting account of how these lectures were constructed. "All through his life he kept a journal. This book, he said, was his 'Savings Bank.' The thoughts thus received and garnered in his journals were indexed, and a great many of them ap-

peared in his published works. They were religiously set down just as they came, in no order except chronological, but later they were grouped, enlarged or pruned, illustrated, worked into a lecture or discourse, and, after having in this capacity undergone repeated testing and rearranging, were finally carefully sifted and more rigidly pruned, and were printed as essays."

Besides his essays and lectures Emerson left some poetry in which is embodied those thoughts which were to him too deep for prose expression. Oliver Wendell Holmes in speaking of this says: "Emerson wrote occasionally in verse from his school-days until he had reached the age which used to be known as the grand climacteric, sixty-three. . . . His poems are not and hardly can become popular; they are not meant to be liked by the many, but to be dearly loved and cherished by the few. . . . His occasional lawlessness in technical construction, his somewhat fantastic expressions, his enigmatic obscurities hardly detract from the pleasant surprise his verses so often bring with them. . . . The poetic license which we allow in the verse of Emerson is more than excused by the noble spirit which makes us forget its occasional blemishes, sometimes to be pleased with them as characteristic of the writer."

Emerson was always a striking figure in the intellectual life of America. His discourses were above all things inspiring. Through them many were induced to strive for a higher self-culture. His influence can be discerned in all the literary movements of the time. He was the central figure of the so-called transcendental school which was so prominent fifty years ago, although he always rather held aloof from any enthusiastic participation in the movement.

Emerson lived a quiet life in Concord, Massachusetts. "He was a first-rate neighbor and one who always kept his fences up." He traveled extensively on his lecturing tours, even going as far as England. In *English Traits* he has recorded his impressions of what he saw of English life and manners.

Oliver Wendell Holmes has described him in this wise: "His personal appearance was that of the typical New Englander of college-bred ancestry. Tall, spare, slender, with

sloping shoulders, slightly stooping in his later years, with light hair and eyes, the scholar's complexion, the prominent, somewhat arched nose which belongs to many of the New England sub-species, thin lips, suggestive of delicacy, but having nothing like primness, still less of the rigidity which is often noticeable in the generation succeeding next to that of the men in their shirt-sleeves, he would have been noticed anywhere as one evidently a scholarly thinker astray from the alcove or the study, which were his natural habitats. His voice was very sweet, and penetrating without any loudness or mark of effort. His enunciation was beautifully clear, but he often hesitated as if waiting for the right word to present itself. His manner was very quiet, his smile was pleasant, but he did not like explosive laughter any better than Hawthorne did. None who met him can fail to recall that serene and kindly presence, in which there was mingled a certain spiritual remoteness with the most benignant human welcome to all who were privileged to enjoy his companionship."

Emerson died April 27, 1882, after a few days' illness from pneumonia. Dr. Garnett in his excellent biography says: "Seldom had 'the reaper whose name is Death' gathered such illustrious harvest as between December 1880 and April 1882. In the first month of this period George Eliot passed away, in the ensuing February Carlyle followed; in April Lord Beaconsfield died, deplored by his party, nor unregretted by his country; in February of the following year Longfellow was carried to the tomb; in April Rossetti was laid to rest by the sea, and the pavement of Westminster Abbey was disturbed to receive the dust of Darwin. And now Emerson lay down in death beside the painter of man and the searcher of nature, the English-Oriental statesman, the poet of the plain man and the poet of the artist, and the prophet whose name is indissolubly linked with his own. All these men passed into Eternity laden with the spoils of Time, but of none of them could it be said, as of Emerson, that the most shining intellectual glory and the most potent intellectual force of a continent had departed along with him."

Critical Opinions of Emerson and his Writings

Matthew Arnold, in an address on Emerson delivered in Boston, gave an excellent estimate of the rank we should accord to him in the great hierarchy of letters. Some, perhaps, will think that Arnold was unappreciative and cold, but dispassionate readers will be inclined to agree with his judgment of our great American.

After a review of the poetical works of Emerson the English critic draws his conclusions as follows :

"I do not then place Emerson among the great poets. But I go farther, and say that I do not place him among the great writers, the great men of letters. Who are the great men of letters ? They are men like Cicero, Plato, Bacon, Pascal, Swift, Voltaire—writers with, in the first place, a genius and instinct for style. . . . Brilliant and powerful passages in a man's writings do not prove his possession of it. Emerson has passages of noble and pathetic eloquence ; he has passages of shrewd and felicitous wit ; he has crisp epigram ; he has passages of exquisitely touched observation of nature. Yet he is not a great writer. . . . Carlyle formulates perfectly the defects of his friend's poetic and literary productions when he says : 'For me it is too ethereal, speculative, theoretic ; I will have all things condense themselves, take shape and body, if they are to have my sympathy.' . . .

". . . Not with the Miltons and Grays, not with the Platos and Spinozas, not with the Swifts and Voltaires, not with the Montaignes and Addisons, can we rank Emerson. No man could see this clearer than Emerson himself. 'Alas, my friend,' he writes in reply to Carlyle, who had exhorted him to creative work,—'Alas, my friend, I can do no such gay thing as you say. I do not belong to the poets, but only to a low department of literature,—the reporters ; suburban men.' He deprecated his friend's praise ; praise 'generous to a fault'

he calls it; praise 'generous to the shaming of me,—cold, fastidious, ebbing person that I am.'"

After all this unfavorable criticism Arnold begins to praise. Quoting passages from the Essays, he adds:

"This is tonic indeed! And let no one object that it is too general; that more practical, positive direction is what we want. . . . Yes, truly, his insight is admirable; his truth is precious. Yet the secret of his effect is not even in these; it is in his temper. It is in the hopeful, serene, beautiful temper wherewith these, in Emerson, are indissolubly united; in which they work and have their being. . . . One can scarcely overrate the importance of holding fast to happiness and hope. It gives to Emerson's work an invaluable virtue. As Wordsworth's poetry is, in my judgment, the most important done in verse, in our language, during the present century, so Emerson's Essays are, I think, the most important work done in prose. . . . But by his conviction that in the life of the spirit is happiness, and by his hope that this life of the spirit will come more and more to be sanely understood, and to prevail, and to work for happiness,—by this conviction and hope Emerson was great, and he will surely prove in the end to have been right in them. . . . You cannot prize him too much, nor heed him too diligently."

Herman Grimm, a German critic of great influence in his own country, did much to obtain a hearing for Emerson's works in Germany. At first the Germans could not understand the unusual English, the unaccustomed turns of phrase which are so characteristic of Emerson's style.

"Macaulay gives them no difficulty; even Carlyle is comprehended. But in Emerson's writings the broad turnpike is suddenly changed into a hazardous sandy foot-path. His thoughts and his style are American. He is not writing for Berlin, but for the people of Massachusetts. . . . It is an art to rise above what we have been taught. . . . All great men are seen to possess this freedom. They derive their standard from their own natures, and their observations on life are so natural and spontaneous that it would seem as if the most

illiterate person with a scrap of common-sense would have made the same. . . . We become wiser with them, and know not how the difficult appears easy and the involved plain.

"Emerson possesses this noble manner of communicating himself. He inspires me with courage and confidence. He has read and seen but conceals the labor. I meet in his works plenty of familiar facts, but he does not employ them to figure up anew the old worn-out problems: each stands on a new spot and serves for new combinations. From everything he sees the direct line issuing which connects it with the focus of life. . .

". . . Emerson's theory is that of the 'sovereignty of the individual.' To discover what a young man is good for, and to equip him for the path he is to strike out in life, regardless of any other consideration, is the great duty to which he calls attention. He makes men self-reliant. He reveals to the eyes of the idealist the magnificent results of practical activity, and unfolds before the realist the grandeur of the ideal world of thought. No man is to allow himself, through prejudice, to make a mistake in choosing the task to which he will devote his life. Emerson's essays are, as it were, printed sermons,—all having this same text. . . . The wealth and harmony of his language overpowered and entranced me anew. But even now I cannot say wherein the secret of his influence lies. What he has written is like life itself—the unbroken thread ever lengthened through the addition of the small events which make up each day's experience."

Froude in his famous "Life of Carlyle" gives an interesting description of Emerson's visit to the Carlyles in Scotland:

"The Carlyles were sitting alone at dinner on a Sunday afternoon at the end of August when a Dumfries carriage drove to the door, and there stepped out of it a young American then unknown to fame, but whose influence in his own country equals that of Carlyle in ours, and whose name stands connected with his wherever the English language is spoken. Emerson, the younger of the two, had just broken

his Unitarian fetters, and was looking out and around him like a young eagle longing for light. He had read Carlyle's articles and had discerned with the instinct of genius that here was a voice speaking real and fiery convictions, and no longer echoes and conventionalisms. He had come to Europe to study its social and spiritual phenomena; and to the young Emerson as to the old Goethe, the most important of them appeared to be Carlyle. . . . The acquaintance then begun to their mutual pleasure ripened into a deep friendship, which has remained unclouded in spite of wide divergences of opinion throughout their working lives."

Carlyle wrote to his mother after Emerson had left:

"Our third happiness was the arrival of a certain young unknown friend named Emerson, from Boston, in the United States, who turned aside so far from his British, French, and Italian travels to see me here! He had an introduction from Mill and a Frenchman (Baron d'Eichthal's nephew) whom John knew at Rome. Of course, we could do no other than welcome him; the rather as he seemed to be one of the most lovable creatures in himself we had ever looked on. He stayed till next day with us, and talked and heard to his heart's content, and left us all really sad to part with him."

In 1841 Carlyle wrote to John Sterling a few words apropos of the recent publication of Emerson's essays in England:

"I love Emerson's book, not for its detached opinions, not even for the scheme of the general world he has framed for himself, or any eminence of talent he has expressed that with, but simply because it is his own book; because there is a tone of veracity, an unmistakable air of its being *his*, and a real utterance of a human soul, not a mere echo of such. I consider it, in that sense, highly remarkable, rare, very rare, in these days of ours. Ach Gott! It is frightful to live among echoes. The few that read the book, I imagine, will get benefit of it. To America, I sometimes say that Emerson, such as he is, seems to me like a kind of New Era."

John Morley, the acute English critic, has made an analytic study of Emerson's style, which may reconcile the reader to some of its exasperating peculiarities.

"One of the traits that every critic notes in Emerson's writing is that it is so abrupt, so sudden in its transitions, so discontinuous, so inconsecutive. Dislike of a sentence that drags made him unconscious of the quality that French critics name *coulant.* Everything is thrown in just as it comes, and sometimes the pell-mell is enough to persuade us that Pope did not exaggerate when he said that no one qualification is so likely to make a good writer as the power of rejecting his own thoughts. . . . Apart from his difficult staccato, Emerson is not free from secondary faults. He uses words that are not only odd, but vicious in construction; he is sometimes oblique and he is often clumsy; and there is a visible feeling after epigrams that do not always come. When people say that Emerson's style must be good and admirable because it fits his thought, they forget that though it is well that a robe should fit, there is still something to be said about its cut and fashion. . . . Yet, as happens to all fine minds, there came to Emerson ways of expression deeply marked with character. On every page there is set the strong stamp of sincerity, and the attraction of a certain artlessness; the most awkward sentence rings true; and there is often a pure and simple note that touches us more than if it were the perfection of elaborated melody.

CRITICAL OPINIONS OF "NATURE"

"The publication of the little volume called 'Nature,'" says Whipple, "lifted the heretic Unitarian parson into a leader of a new school of thought, and New England transcendentalism dates its existence from that charming and suggestive book. At the time of its publication it was impossible to meet educated men and women in any social circle in Boston without hearing 'Nature' discussed; the elderly scholars assailing and the younger defending it." "It fell," says Holmes, "like an aërolite; unasked for, unaccounted for, unexpected, almost unwelcome,—a stumbling-block to be got out of the well-trodden highway of New England scholastic intelligence."

"Nature" is essentially a prose poem, and its eight chapters, as Holmes suggests, "might almost as well have been

called cantos." In its own day, the shock of its strange ideas was chiefly effective. "As we read it to-day," says Chapman, "we are struck by its extraordinary beauty of language. It is a supersensuous, lyrical, and sincere rhapsody; written evidently by a man of genius. It reveals a nature compelling respect,—a Shelley, and yet a sort of Yankee Shelley, who is mad only when the wind is nor'-nor'-west; a mature nature which must have been nourished for years upon its own thoughts, to speak this new language so eloquently, to stand so calmly on its feet. The deliverance of his thought is so perfect that this work adapts itself to our mood and has the quality of poetry."

Richard Garnett says: "Of all Emerson's writings this is the most individual, and the most adapted for a general introduction to his ideas. These ideas are not, in fact, peculiar to him; and yet the little book is one of the most original ever written, and one of those most likely to effect an intellectual revolution in the mind capable of apprehending it. The reason is mainly the intense vitality of the manner, and the translation of abstract arguments into concrete shapes of witchery and beauty. It contains not a sentence that is not beautiful—not with the cold beauty of art, but with the radiance and warmth of feeling. Its dominant note is rapture, like the joy of one who has found an enchanted realm, or who has convinced himself that old stories deemed too beautiful to be true are true indeed. Yet it is exempt from extravagance; the splendor of language is chastened by taste, and the gladness and significance of the author's announcements would justify even a more ardent enthusiasm."

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CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF EMERSON'S PRINCIPAL WORKS

Nature,	1836	English Traits,	1856
Essays (First Series),	1841	Conduct of Life,	1860
Essays (Second Series),	1844	Society and Solitude,	1870
Poems,	1847	Correspondence of Thomas Carlyle and R. W. Emerson,	1883
Miscellanies,	1849		
Representative Men,	1850		

NATURE

A SUBTLE chain of countless rings
The next unto the farthest brings ;
The eye reads omens where it goes,
And speaks all languages the rose ;
And, striving to be man, the worm
Mounts through all the spires of form.

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

Our age is retrospective. It builds the sepulchers of the fathers. It writes biographies, histories, and criticism. The foregoing generations [1] beheld God and nature face to face; we, through their eyes. Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe? Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of theirs? Embosomed for a season in nature, whose floods of life stream around and through us, and invite us by the powers they supply, to action proportioned to nature,

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1. **The foregoing generations.** The influence of Wordsworth upon Emerson is evident throughout this essay. Oliver Wendell Holmes points out the similarity between these opening lines and Wordsworth's preface to "The Excursion" :

> "Paradise and groves
> Elysian, Fortunate Fields—like those of old
> Sought in the Atlantic Main—why should they be
> A history only of departed things,
> Or a mere fiction of what never was?"

why should we grope among the dry bones of the past, or put the living generation into masquerade out of its faded wardrobe? The sun shines to-day also. There is more wool and flax in the fields. There are new lands, new men, new thoughts. Let us demand our own works and laws and worship.

Undoubtedly we have no questions to ask which are unanswerable. We must trust the perfection of the creation so far as to believe that whatever curiosity the order of things has awakened in our minds, the order of things can satisfy. Every man's condition is a solution in hieroglyphic to those inquiries he would put. He acts it as life, before he apprehends it as truth. In like manner, nature is already, in its forms and tendencies, describing its own design. Let us interrogate the great apparition that shines so peacefully around us. Let us inquire, to what end is nature?

All science has one aim, namely, to find a theory of nature. We have theories of races and of functions, but scarcely yet a remote approach to an idea of creation. We are now so far from the road to truth, that religious teachers dispute and hate each other, and speculative men are esteemed unsound and frivolous. But to a sound judgment, the most abstract truth is the most practical. Whenever a true theory appears, it will be its own evidence. Its test is, that it will explain all phenomena. Now many are thought not only unexplained but inexplicable; as language, sleep, madness, dreams, beasts, sex.

Philosophically considered, the universe is composed of Nature and the Soul. Strictly speaking, therefore, all that is separate from us, all which philosophy dis-

tinguishes as the Not Me, that is, both nature and art, all other men and my own body, must be ranked under this name, Nature. In enumerating the values of nature and casting up their sum, I shall use the word in both senses;—in its common and in its philosophical import. In inquiries so general as our present one, the inaccuracy is not material; no confusion of thought will occur. Nature, in the common sense, refers to essences unchanged by man; space, the air, the river, the leaf. Art is applied to the mixture of his will with the same things, as in a house, a canal, a statue, a picture. But his operations taken together are so insignificant, a little chipping, baking, patching, and washing, that in an impression so grand as that of the world on the human mind, they do not vary the result.

CHAPTER I

To go into solitude, a man needs to retire as much from his chamber as from society. I am not solitary whilst I read and write, though nobody is with me. But if a man would be alone, let him look at the stars. The rays that come from those heavenly worlds will separate between him and what he touches. One might think the atmosphere was made transparent with this design, to give man, in the heavenly bodies, the perpetual presence of the sublime. Seen in the streets of cities, how great they are! If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore; and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God which

had been shown! But every night come out these envoys of beauty, and light the universe with their admonishing smile.

The stars awaken a certain reverence, because though always present, they are inaccessible; but all natural objects make a kindred impression, when the mind is open to their influence. Nature never wears a mean appearance. Neither does the wisest man extort her secret, and lose his curiosity by finding out all her perfection. Nature never became a toy to a wise spirit. The flowers, the animals, the mountains, reflected the wisdom of his best hour, as much as they had delighted the simplicity of his childhood.

When we speak of nature in this manner, we have a distinct but most poetical sense in the mind. We mean the integrity of impression made by manifold natural objects. It is this which distinguishes the stick of timber of the wood-cutter, from the tree of the poet. The charming landscape which I saw this morning is undubitably made up of some twenty or thirty farms. Miller owns this field, Locke that, and Manning the woodland beyond. But none of them owns the landscape. There is a property in the horizon which no man has but he whose eye can integrate all the parts,[1] that is, the poet. This is the best part of these men's farms, yet to this their warranty-deeds give no title.

To speak truly, few adult persons can see nature.

1. **Integrate all the parts.** The poet has a proprietorship in the fields in a way superior to that of farmer Miller and farmer Locke, because he can unite, integrate all the farms in a single, total impression of landscape beauty; just as the artist selects and combines the effects of many fields, making an artistic whole upon his canvas, which he carries away as his own.

Most persons do not see the sun.[1] At least they have a very superficial seeing. The sun illuminates only the eye of the man, but shines into the eye and the heart of the child.[2] The lover of nature is he whose inward and outward senses are still truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood. His intercourse with heaven and earth becomes part of his daily food. In the presence of nature a wild delight runs through the man, in spite of real sorrows. Nature says,—he is my creature, and maugre [3] all his impertinent griefs, he shall be glad with me. Not the sun or the summer alone, but every hour and season yields its tribute of delight; for every hour and change corresponds to and authorizes a different state of the mind, from breathless noon to grimmest midnight. Nature is a setting that fits equally well a comic or a mourning piece. In good health, the air is a cordial of incredible virtue. Crossing a bare common, in snow puddles, at twilight, under a clouded sky, without having in my thoughts any occurrence of special good fortune, I have enjoyed a perfect exhilaration. I am glad to the brink of fear. In the woods, too, a man casts off his years, as the snake his slough, and at what period soever of life, is always a child. In the woods is perpetual youth. Within

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1. **Most persons do not see the sun.** So, too, Ruskin says: "It is a strange thing how little in general people know about the sky."

2. **The sun illuminates, etc.** This idea of the broader and more intimate relationship of childhood to nature is the fundamental idea of Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality."

> "Shades of the prison-house begin to close
> Upon the growing boy."

3. **Maugre.** Is the use of this word good English usage, or does the word have to be translated?

these plantations of God, a decorum and sanctity reign, a perennial festival is dressed, and the guest sees not how he should tire of them in a thousand years. In the woods, we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life,—no disgrace, no calamity (leaving me my eyes), which nature cannot repair. Standing on the bare ground,—my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space,—all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball; [1] I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God. The name of the nearest friend sounds then foreign and accidental: to be brothers, to be acquaintances,—master or servant, is then a trifle and a disturbance. I am the lover of uncontained and immortal beauty. In the wilderness, I find something more dear and connate [2] than in streets or villages. In the tranquil landscape, and especially in the distant line of the horizon, man beholds somewhat as beautiful as his own nature.

The greatest delight which the fields and woods minister is the suggestion of an occult relation between

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1. **Transparent eye-ball.** Emerson is describing, by one of his bold transcendental metaphors, an exalted state of feeling in which common material relations seem to vanish, and all the senses except sight cease their activity. Such moments of exaltation in the presence of nature bring a sense of kinship with God. "Man, when he thinks, is placed at the center of beings, where a ray of relation passes from every other being to him; every natural fact is seen as the symbol of a spiritual fact, the expression of a thought that does not stop there, but goes on endlessly to embody itself in higher and higher forms."—*Cabot's "Memoir of Emerson."*

2. **Connate.** Latin *connatus*, born with. The living things of the wilderness seem more closely related to him, as by birth, than the people of streets and villages.

man and the vegetable. I am not alone and unacknowledged. They nod to me, and I to them. The waving of the boughs in the storm is new to me and old. It takes me by surprise, and yet is not unknown. Its effect is like that of a higher thought or a better emotion coming over me, when I deemed I was thinking justly or doing right.

Yet it is certain that the power to produce this delight does not reside in nature, but in man, or in a harmony of both.[1] It is necessary to use these pleasures with great temperance. For nature is not always tricked in holiday attire, but the same scene which yesterday breathed perfume and glittered as for the frolic of the nymphs, is overspread with melancholy to-day. Nature always wears the colors of the spirit. To a man laboring under calamity, the heat of his own fire hath sadness in it.[2] Then there is a kind of contempt of the landscape felt by him who has just lost by death a dear friend. The sky is less grand as it shuts down over less worth in the population.

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1. Yet it is certain, etc. Emerson says elsewhere, in substance, that we get from nature what we carry to nature. In chap. iii. of this essay he says: "In proportion to the energy of his thought and will, he takes up the world into himself."

2. To a man laboring, etc. There is possibly an allusion here to the death of his brother Charles, which occurred while this essay was in preparation.

CHAPTER II

COMMODITY [1]

Whoever considers the final cause [2] of the world will discern a multitude of uses that enter as parts into that result. They all admit of being thrown into one of the following classes: Commodity; Beauty; Language; and Discipline.

Under the general name of Commodity, I rank all those advantages which our senses owe to nature. This, of course, is a benefit which is temporary and mediate, not ultimate, like its service to the soul. Yet although low, it is perfect in its kind, and is the only use of nature which all men apprehend. The misery of man appears like childish petulance, when we explore the steady and prodigal provision that has been made for his support and delight on this green ball which floats him through the heavens. What angels invented these splendid ornaments, these rich conveniences, this ocean of air above,[3] this ocean of water beneath, this firmament [4] of earth beneath? this zodiac of lights, this tent of dropping clouds, this striped coat

1. **Commodity.** Latin, *commodus*, convenient, helpful. Anything that is useful, convenient, or serviceable. Such things become *commodities*, in the commercial sense of the word.

2. **Final cause.** The purpose or end for which an effect exists. A philosophical term, denoting one of the four forms of cause recognized by Aristotle: material, formal, efficient, and final.

3. **This ocean of air, etc.** Compare "Hamlet," Act. II. sc. 2: "This most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire."

4. **Firmament.** Used here in the primary sense of foundation, support, something solid. Latin *firmamentum*, *firmare*, to make strong.

of climates, this fourfold year? Beasts, fire, water, stones, and corn serve him. The field is at once his floor, his work-yard, his play-ground, his garden, and his bed.

> More servants wait on man
> Than he'll take notice of.[1]

Nature, in its ministry to man, is not only the material, but is also the process and the result. All the parts incessantly work into each other's hands for the profit of man. The wind sows the seed;[2] the sun evaporates the sea; the wind blows the vapor to the field; the ice, on the other side of the planet, condenses rain on this; the rain feeds the plant; the plant feeds the animal; and thus the endless circulations of the divine charity nourish man.

The useful arts are reproductions or new combinations by the wit of man, of the same natural benefactors. He no longer waits for favoring gales, but by means of steam, he realizes the fable of Æolus's bag,[3] and carries the two and thirty winds in the boiler of his boat. To diminish friction, he paves the road with iron bars, and, mounting a coach with a ship-load of men, animals, and merchandise behind him, he darts

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1. "More servants," etc. From George Herbert. See chap. viii. of this essay.

2. The wind sows the seed. Recall some of the marvelous contrivances by which the wind is enabled to scatter the seeds, as those of the maple, elm, thistle, and milk-weed.

3. Æolus's bag. Æolus, ruler of the winds, gave to Ulysses all the winds, except the favorable Zephyrus, tied up securely in an ox-hide bag. When in sight of home, Ulysses, tired with nine days' watching, fell asleep, and his companions, believing that he had received treasure from Æolus, opened the bag and let out the hostile winds, and the fleet was driven back to the Æolian islands. Homer's "Odyssey," Bk. X.

through the country, from town to town, like an eagle or a swallow through the air. By the aggregate of these aids, how is the face of the world changed, from the era of Noah to that of Napoleon! The private poor man hath cities, ships, canals, bridges, built for him. He goes to the post-office, and the human race run on his errands; to the book-shop, and the human race read and write of all that happens, for him; to the court-house, and nations repair his wrongs.[1] He sets his house upon the road, and the human race go forth every morning, and shovel out the snow, and cut a path for him.

But there is no need of specifying particulars in this class of uses. The catalogue is endless, and the examples so obvious, that I shall leave them to the reader's reflection, with the general remark, that this mercenary benefit is one which has respect to a farther good. A man is fed, not that he may be fed, but that he may work.

CHAPTER III

BEAUTY

A nobler want of man is served by nature, namely, the love of Beauty.

The ancient Greeks called the world κόσμος,[2]

1. He goes to the post-office, etc. The individual man is served by all the world; he shares the benefits of the active pursuits of all other men. We more often hear the opposite view expressed, that the individual serves the world, to his own loss.

2. κόσμος. The Greek meaning is primarily order, harmony; hence the orderly system of the universe is so called, in distinction from χάος, confusion, formlessness. The "music of the spheres" was one form of expressing the sense of this beauty and harmony in the interrelated bodies of the universe.

beauty. Such is the constitution of all things, or such the plastic power [1] of the human eye, that the primary forms, as the sky, the mountain, the tree, the animal, give us a delight in and for themselves; a pleasure arising from outline, color, motion, and grouping. This seems partly owing to the eye itself. The eye is the best of artists. By the mutual action of its structure and of the laws of light, perspective is produced, which integrates every mass of objects, of what character soever, into a well colored and shaded globe, so that where the particular objects are mean and unaffecting, the landscape which they compose is round and symmetrical. And as the eye is the best composer, so light is the first of painters. There is no object so foul that intense light will not make it beautiful.[2] And the stimulus it affords to the sense, and a sort of infinitude which it hath, like space and time, make all matter gay. Even the corpse has its own beauty. But besides this general grace diffused over nature, almost all the individual forms are agreeable to the eye, as is proved by our endless imitations of some of them, as the acorn, the grape, the pine-cone, the wheat-ear, the egg, the wings and forms of most birds, the lion's claw, the serpent, the butterfly, seashells, flames, clouds, buds, leaves, and the forms of many trees, as the palm.

For better consideration, we may distribute the aspects of beauty in a threefold manner.

1. First, the simple perception of natural forms is

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1. Plastic power. The power to mold into definite forms or shapes, like the sculptor.

2. There is no object, etc. Examine the grammatical structure of this sentence.

a delight. The influence of the forms and actions in nature is so needful to man, that, in its lowest functions, it seems to lie on the confines of commodity and beauty. To the body and mind which have been cramped by noxious work or company, nature is medicinal and restores their tone. The tradesman, the attorney comes out of the din and craft of the street and sees the sky and the woods, and is a man again. In their eternal calm, he finds himself. The health of the eye seems to demand a horizon. We are never tired, so long as we can see far enough.

But in other hours, nature satisfies by its loveliness, and without any mixture of corporeal benefit. I see the spectacle of morning from the hill-top over against my house, from day-break to sun-rise, with emotions which an angel might share. The long slender bars of cloud float like fishes in the sea of crimson light. From the earth, as a shore, I look out into that silent sea. I seem to partake its rapid transformations; the active enchantment reaches my dust,[1] and I dilate and conspire with the morning wind. How does nature deify us with a few and cheap elements! Give me health and a day, and I will make the pomp of emperors ridiculous. The dawn is my Assyria; [2] the sunset and moon-rise my Paphos,[3] and unimaginable realms of

1. My dust. The enchantment sweeps over me and takes me up, like the wind. *Conspire* is here used in its Latin sense, *con-spirare*, to breathe with.

2. Assyria. The representative of the oldest Eastern civilization. Emerson is suggesting the sweep of civilization westward. Notice his intention of briefly characterizing and contrasting the national tendencies of thought in England and Germany.

3. Paphos. An ancient city of Cyprus, where was a celebrated temple of Aphrodite, whose priests celebrated her mysterious rites, and exercised a kind of religious authority over the island.

faerie;[1] broad noon shall be my England of the senses and the understanding; the night shall be my Germany of mystic philosophy and dreams.

Not less excellent, except for our less susceptibility in the afternoon, was the charm, last evening, of a January sunset. The western clouds divided and subdivided themselves into pink flakes modulated with tints of unspeakable softness, and the air had so much life and sweetness that it was a pain to come within doors. What was it that nature would say? Was there no meaning in the live repose of the valley behind the mill, and which Homer or Shakspere could not re-form for me in words? The leafless trees become spires of flame in the sunset, with the blue east for their background, and the stars of the dead calices of flowers, and every withered stem and stubble rimed with frost, contribute something to the mute music.

The inhabitants of cities suppose that the country landscape is pleasant only half the year. I please myself with the graces of the winter scenery, and believe that we are as much touched by it as by the genial influences of summer. To the attentive eye, each moment of the year has its own beauty, and in the same field, it beholds, every hour, a picture which was never seen before, and which shall never be seen again. The heavens change every moment, and reflect their glory or gloom on the plains beneath. The state of the crop in the surrounding farms alters the expression of the earth from week to week. The succession of native plants in the pastures and roadsides, which makes the silent clock by which time tells the summer hours, will

1. Faerie. An archaic form of *fairy*, familiar in Spenser's "Faerie Queen," meaning enchantment or magic.

make even the divisions of the day sensible to a keen observer. The tribes of birds and insects, like the plants punctual to their time, follow each other, and the year has room for all. By watercourses, the variety is greater. In July, the blue pontederia or pickerel-weed blooms in large beds in the shallow parts of our pleasant river,[1] and swarms with yellow butterflies in continual motion. Art cannot rival this pomp of purple and gold. Indeed the river is a perpetual gala, and boasts each month a new ornament.

But this beauty of nature which is seen and felt as beauty, is the least part. The shows of day, the dewy morning, the rainbow, mountains, orchards in blossom, stars, moonlight, shadows in still water, and the like, if too eagerly hunted, become shows merely, and mock us with their unreality. Go out of the house to see the moon, and 't is mere tinsel; it will not please as when its light shines upon your necessary journey. The beauty that shimmers in the yellow afternoons of October, who ever could clutch it? Go forth to find it, and it is gone; 't is only a mirage as you look from the windows of diligence.

2. The presence of a higher, namely, of the spiritual

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1. **Our pleasant river.** The Musketaquid, flowing through Concord. "When I bought my farm," wrote Emerson, "I did not know what a bargain I had in the bluebirds, bobolinks, and thrushes, which were not charged in the bill. As little did I guess what sublime mornings and sunsets I was buying, what reaches of landscape, and what fields and lanes for a tramp. Neither did I fully consider what an indescribable luxury is our Indian river, which runs parallel with the village street, and to which every house on that long street has a back door which leads down through the garden to the river bank, where a skiff or a dory gives you, all summer, access to enchantments new every day, and, all winter, two miles of ice for the skater."

element is essential to its perfection. The high and divine beauty which can be loved without effeminacy, is that which is found in combination with the human will. Beauty is the mark God sets upon virtue. Every natural action is graceful. Every heroic act is also decent,[1] and causes the place and the bystanders to shine. We are taught by great actions that the universe is the property of every individual in it. Every rational creature has all nature for his dowry and estate. It is his, if he will. He may divest himself of it; he may creep into a corner, and abdicate his kingdom, as most men do, but he is entitled to the world by his constitution. In proportion to the energy of his thought and will, he takes up the world into himself. "All those things for which men plow, build, or sail, obey virtue;" said Sallust.[2] "The winds and waves," said Gibbon,[3] "are always on the side of the ablest navigators." So are the sun and moon and all the stars of heaven. When a noble act is done,—perchance in a scene of great natural beauty; when Leonidas[4] and his three hundred martyrs consume one day in dying,

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1. **Decent.** Latin, *decens*, becoming, decorous; as in Milton's "Il Penseroso":

> "And sable stole of Cyprus lawn
> Over thy decent shoulders drawn."

2. **Sallust.** A Roman historian (B. C. 86–34), whose "Catilina," a history of the conspiracy of Catiline in the consulship of Cicero, is often read in schools.

3. **Gibbon.** Edward Gibbon (1737–1794), the English historian, whose "History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" is one of the grandest pieces of historical writing in any language.

4. **Leonidas.** A Spartan king who, in 480 B. C., with three hundred Spartans and seven hundred Thespians, defended against the Persian army of Xerxes the pass of Thermopylæ, through which passed the only road from northern into southern Greece.

and the sun and moon come each and look at them once in the steep defile of Thermopylæ; when Arnold Winkelried,[1] in the high Alps, under the shadow of the avalanche, gathers in his side a sheaf of Austrian spears to break the line for his comrades; are not these heroes entitled to add the beauty of the scene to the beauty of the deed? When the bark of Columbus nears the shore of America;—before it, the beach lined with savages, fleeing out of all their huts of cane; the sea behind; and the purple mountains of the Indian Archipelago around, can we separate the man from the living picture? Does not the New World clothe his form with her palm-groves and savannahs as fit drapery? Ever does natural beauty steal in like air, and envelop great actions. When Sir Harry Vane[2] was dragged up the Tower-hill, sitting on a sled, to suffer death as the champion of the English laws, one of the multitude cried out to him, "You never sate on so glorious a seat!" Charles II., to intimidate the citizens of London, caused the patriot Lord Russell[3] to be drawn in an open coach through the principal streets of the city on his way to the scaffold. "But," his biographer says, "the multitude imagined they

1. **Arnold Winkelried.** A Swiss patriot who is said to have decided the victory at Sempach, in 1386, by grasping a number of Austrian spears and plunging them into his own breast, thus opening a way through the enemy's line over his dead body. Probably, however, the story is only a legend.

2. **Sir Harry Vane.** A distinguished English statesman, for one year governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony; he took an active part in the stormy affairs of Cromwell's government, and was executed by Charles II.

3. **Lord Russell.** Another of the victims of Charles II., condemned in 1683 on a charge of high treason for supposed complicity in the Rye House Plot, a plot organized to kill the king.

saw liberty and virtue sitting by his side." In private places, among sordid objects, an act of truth or heroism seems at once to draw to itself the sky as its temple, the sun as its candle. Nature stretches out her arms to embrace man, only let his thoughts be of equal greatness. Willingly does she follow his steps with the rose and the violet, and bend her lines of grandeur and grace to the decoration of her darling child. Only let his thoughts be of equal scope, and the frame will suit the picture. A virtuous man is in unison with her works, and makes the central figure of the visible sphere. Homer, Pindar, Socrates, Phocion,[1] associate themselves fitly in our memory with the geography and climate of Greece. The visible heavens and earth sympathize with Jesus. And in common life whosoever has seen a person of powerful character and happy genius, will have remarked how easily he took all things along with him,—the persons, the opinions, and the day, and nature became ancillary[2] to a man.

3. There is still another aspect under which the beauty of the world may be viewed, namely, as it becomes an object of the intellect. Beside the relation of things to virtue, they have a relation to thought. The intellect searches out the absolute order of things as they stand in the mind of God, and without the colors of affection. The intellectual and the active powers seem to succeed each other, and the ex-

1. **Homer, Pindar, Socrates, Phocion.** The greatest Greek epic poet, the greatest lyric poet, one of the greatest philosophers, and one of the greatest statesmen and generals. The four names represent the intellectual glory of Greece.

2. **Ancillary.** Latin, *ancilla*, maid-servant; hence subservient, auxiliary, giving aid.

clusive activity of the one generates the exclusive activity of the other. There is something unfriendly in each to the other, but they are like the alternate periods of feeding and working in animals; each prepares and will be followed by the other. Therefore does beauty, which, in relation to actions, as we have seen, comes unsought, and comes because it is unsought, remain for the apprehension and pursuit of the intellect; and then again, in its turn, of the active power. Nothing divine dies. All good is eternally reproductive. The beauty of nature re-forms itself in the mind, and not for barren contemplation, but for new creation.

All men are in some degree impressed by the face of the world; some men even to delight. This love of beauty is Taste. Others have the same love in such excess, that, not content with admiring, they seek to embody it in new forms. The creation of beauty is Art.

The production of a work of art throws a light upon the mystery of humanity. A work of art is an abstract or epitome of the world. It is the result or expression of nature, in miniature. For although the works of nature are innumerable and all different, the result or the expression of them all is similar and single. Nature is a sea of forms radically alike and even unique. A leaf, a sunbeam, a landscape, the ocean, make an analogous impression on the mind. What is common to them all,—that perfectness and harmony, is beauty. The standard of beauty is the entire circuit of natural forms,—the totality of nature; which the Italians expressed by defining beauty "il piu nell' uno." [1]

1. "Il piu nell' uno." The many in the one.

Nothing is quite beautiful alone;[1] nothing but is beautiful in the whole. A single object is only so far beautiful as it suggests this universal grace. The poet, the painter, the sculptor, the musician, the architect, seek each to concentrate this radiance of the world on one point, and each in his several work to satisfy the love of beauty which stimulates him to produce. Thus is Art a nature passed through the alembic of man. Thus in art does Nature work through the will of a man filled with the beauty of her first works.

The world thus exists to the soul to satisfy the desire of beauty. This element I call an ultimate end. No reason can be asked or given why the soul seeks beauty. Beauty, in its largest and profoundest sense, is one expression for the universe. God is the all-fair. Truth, and goodness, and beauty, are but different faces of the same All. But beauty in nature is not ultimate.[2] It is the herald of inward and eternal beauty, and is not alone a solid and satisfactory good. It must stand as a part, and not as yet the last or highest expression of the final cause of nature.

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1. **Nothing is quite beautiful alone.** The poem "Each and All" should be read with this chapter on Beauty. There Emerson says :

> "All are needed by each one ;
> Nothing is fair or good alone."

2. **Beauty in nature is not ultimate.** In the charming poem, "The Rhodora," Emerson says :

> "Beauty is its own excuse for being."

But here, in a more theoretical mood, he makes the beauty of the rose the symbol of something higher and more spiritual.

CHAPTER IV

LANGUAGE

Language is a third use which Nature subserves to man. Nature is the vehicle of thought, and in a single, double, and three-fold degree.

1. Words are signs of natural facts.

2. Particular natural facts are symbols of particular spiritual facts.

3. Nature is the symbol of spirit.

1. Words are signs of natural facts. The use of natural history is to give us aid in supernatural history; the use of the outer creation, to give us language for the beings and changes of the inward creation. Every word which is used to express a moral or intellectual fact, if traced to its root, is found to be borrowed from some material appearance. Right [1] means straight; wrong [2] means twisted. Spirit [3] primarily means wind; transgression,[4] the crossing of a line; supercilious,[5] the raising of the eyebrow. We say the heart to express emotion,[6] the head to denote thought; [7]

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1. Right. Latin, *rectus*, straight, just, right (*regere*, to rule); old English, *recht*.

2. Wrong. From the Anglo-Saxon verb *wring;* hence wrong is that which is wrung or twisted.

3. Spirit. Latin, *spiritus*, breathing or blowing, as of the wind; hence the breath of life, then the soul.

4. Transgression. Latin *trans-gredi* (part. *transgressus*), to step across, step over.

5. Supercilious. Latin *supercilium*, eyebrow, from *super*, above, and *cilium*, eyelid.

6. Emotion. *Emotion* is from the Latin *e-movere*, to move away, stir up, agitate.

7. Thought. Anglo-Saxon *thencan* (pret. *thohte*), to exercise the mind, to judge.

and thought and emotion are words borrowed from sensible things, and now appropriated to spiritual nature. Most of the process by which this transformation is made, is hidden from us in the remote time when language was framed; but the same tendency may be daily observed in children. Children and savages use only nouns or names of things, which they convert into verbs, and apply to analogous mental acts.

2. But this origin of all words that convey a spiritual import,—so conspicuous a fact in the history of language,—is our least debt to nature. It is not words only that are emblematic; it is things which are emblematic. Every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact. Every appearance in nature corresponds to some state of the mind, and that state of the mind can only be described by presenting that natural appearance as its picture. An enraged man is a lion, a cunning man is a fox, a firm man is a rock, a learned man is a torch. A lamb is innocence; a snake is subtle spite; flowers express to us the delicate affections. Light and darkness are our familiar expression for knowledge and ignorance; and heat for love. Visible distance behind and before us, is respectively our image of memory and hope.

Who looks upon a river in a meditative hour and is not reminded of the flux of all things? Throw a stone into the stream, and the circles that propagate themselves are the beautiful type of all influence. Man is conscious of a universal soul within or behind his individual life, wherein, as in a firmament, the natures of Justice, Truth, Love, Freedom, arise and shine. This universal soul he calls Reason: it is not mine, or thine, or his, but we are its; we are its prop-

erty and men. And the blue sky in which the private earth is buried, the sky with its eternal calm, and full of everlasting orbs, is the type of Reason. That which intellectually considered we call Reason, considered in relation to nature, we call Spirit. Spirit is the Creator. Spirit hath life in itself. And man in all ages and countries embodies it in his language as the Father.

It is easily seen that there is nothing lucky or capricious in these analogies, but that they are constant, and pervade nature. These are not the dreams of a few poets, here and there, but man is an analogist, and studies relations in all objects. He is placed in the center of beings, and a ray of relation passes from every other being to him. And neither can man be understood without these objects, nor these objects without man. All the facts in natural history taken by themselves, have no value, but are barren, like a single sex. But marry it to human history, and it is full of life. Whole floras, all Linnæus's [1] and Buffon's [2] volumes, are dry catalogues of facts; but the most trivial of these facts, the habit of a plant, the organs, or work, or noise of an insect, applied to the illustration of a fact in intellectual philosophy, or in any way associated to human nature, affects us in the most lively and agreeable manner. The seed of a plant,— to what affecting analogies in the nature of man is

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1. Linnæus. A celebrated Swedish botanist (1707–1778), founder of the "Linnæan System" for the analysis and classification of plants and flowers.

2. Buffon. An eminent French naturalist (1707–1788), author of many important works in natural history, as the "History of Domestic Animals," "History of Birds," and "Epochs of Nature."

that little fruit made use of, in all discourse, up to the voice of Paul, who calls the human corpse a seed, —"It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." [1] The motion of the earth round its axis and round the sun, makes the day and the year. These are certain amounts of brute light and heat. But is there no intent of an analogy between man's life and the seasons? And do the seasons gain no grandeur or pathos from that analogy? The instincts of the ant are very unimportant considered as the ant's; but the moment a ray of relation is seen to extend from it to man, and the little drudge is seen to be a monitor, a little body with a mighty heart, then all its habits, even that said to be recently observed, that it never sleeps,[2] become sublime.

Because of this radical correspondence between visible things and human thoughts, savages, who have only what is necessary, converse in figures. As we go back in history, language becomes more picturesque, until its infancy, when it is all poetry; or all spiritual facts are represented by natural symbols. The same symbols are found to make the original elements of all languages. It has moreover been observed, that the idioms of all languages approach each other in passages of the greatest eloquence and power. And as this is the first language, so is it the last. This immediate dependence of language upon nature, this conversion of an outward phenomenon into a type of

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1. "It is sown," etc. "1 Corinthians" xv. 44.

2. Never sleeps. Later observations have reversed this opinion. Romanes says: "It is probable that all species of ants enjoy periods of true sleep alternating with those of activity." See "Animal Intelligence," by George J. Romanes, p. 84.

somewhat in human life, never loses its power to affect us. It is this which gives that piquancy to the conversation of a strong-natured farmer or backwoodsman, which all men relish.

A man's power to connect his thought with its proper symbol, and so to utter it, depends on the simplicity of his character, that is, upon his love of truth and his desire to communicate it without loss. The corruption of man is followed by the corruption of language. When simplicity of character and the sovereignty of ideas are broken up by the prevalence of secondary desires, the desire of riches, of pleasure, of power, and of praise,—and duplicity and falsehood take place of simplicity and truth, the power over nature as an interpreter of the will is in a degree lost; new imagery ceases to be created, and old words are perverted to stand for things which are not; a paper currency is employed, when there is no bullion in the vaults. In due time the fraud is manifest, and words lose all power to stimulate the understanding or the affections. Hundreds of writers may be found in every long-civilized nation who for a short time believe and make others believe that they see and utter truths, who do not of themselves clothe one thought in its natural garment, but who feed unconsciously on the language created by the primary writers of the country, those, namely, who hold primarily on nature.

But wise men pierce this rotten diction and fasten words again to visible things; so that picturesque language is at once a commanding certificate that he who employs it is a man in alliance with truth and God. The moment our discourse rises above the ground line of familiar facts and is inflamed with passion or ex-

alted by thought, it clothes itself in images. A man conversing in earnest, if he watch his intellectual processes, will find that a material image more or less luminous arises in his mind, contemporaneous with every thought, which furnishes the vestment of the thought. Hence, good writing and brilliant discourse are perpetual allegories. This imagery is spontaneous. It is the blending of experience with the present action of the mind. It is proper creation. It is the working of the Original Cause through the instruments he has already made.

These facts may suggest the advantage which the country-life possesses, for a powerful mind, over the artificial and curtailed life of cities. We know more from nature than we can at will communicate. Its light flows into the mind evermore, and we forget its presence. The poet, the orator, bred in the woods, whose senses have been nourished by their fair and appeasing changes, year after year, without design and without heed,—shall not lose their lesson altogether, in the roar of cities or the broil of politics. Long hereafter, amidst agitation and terror in national councils,—in the hour of revolution,—these solemn images shall reappear in their morning luster, as fit symbols and words of the thoughts which the passing events shall awaken. At the call of a noble sentiment, again the woods wave, the pines murmur, the river rolls and shines, and the cattle low upon the mountains, as he saw and heard them in his infancy. And with these forms, the spells of persuasion, the keys of power are put into his hands.

3. We are thus assisted by natural objects in the expression of particular meanings. But how great a

language to convey such pepper-corn informations! Did it need such noble races of creatures, this profusion of forms, this host of orbs in heaven, to furnish man with the dictionary and grammar of his municipal speech? Whilst we use this grand cipher [1] to expedite the affairs of our pot and kettle, we feel that we have not yet put it to its use, neither are able. We are like travelers using the cinders of a volcano to roast their eggs. Whilst we see that it always stands ready to clothe what we would say, we cannot avoid the question whether the characters are not significant of themselves. Have mountains, and waves, and skies, no significance but what we consciously give them when we employ them as emblems of our thoughts? The world is emblematic. Parts of speech are metaphors, because the whole of nature is a metaphor of the human mind. The laws of moral nature answer to those of matter as face to face in a glass. "The visible world and the relation of its parts, is the dial plate of the invisible." [2] The axioms of physics translate the laws of ethics. Thus, "the whole is greater than its part;" "reaction is equal to action;" "the smallest weight may be made to lift the greatest, the difference of weight being compensated by time;" and many the like propositions, which have an ethical as well as physical sense. These propositions have a much more extensive and universal sense when applied to human life, than when confined to technical use.

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1. **Cipher.** Any secret form of writing, or method of expressing a hidden meaning by writing. Government dispatches are sent "in cipher."

2. **"The visible world," etc.** Elsewhere Emerson says: "The visible creation is the terminus or the circumference of the invisible world."

In like manner, the memorable words of history and the proverbs of nations consist usually of a natural fact, selected as a picture or parable of a moral truth. Thus; "A rolling stone gathers no moss"; "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush"; "A cripple in the right way will beat a racer in the wrong"; "Make hay while the sun shines"; "'Tis hard to carry a full cup even"; "Vinegar is the son of wine"; "The last ounce broke the camel's back"; "Long-lived trees make roots first";—and the like. In their primary sense these are trivial facts, but we repeat them for the value of their analogical import. What is true of proverbs, is true of all fables, parables, and allegories.

This relation between the mind and matter is not fancied by some poet, but stands in the will of God, and so is free to be known by all men. It appears to men, or it does not appear. When in fortunate hours we ponder this miracle, the wise man doubts if at all other times he is not blind and deaf;

> Can these things be,
> And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
> Without our special wonder? [1]

for the universe becomes transparent, and the light of higher laws than its own shines through it. It is the standing problem which has exercised the wonder and the study of every fine genius since the world began; from the era of the Egyptians [2] and the Brah-

1. "Can these things be," etc. From "Macbeth," Act III. sc. 4. The correct form of the quotation is, "Can such things be," etc.

2. From the era of the Egyptians. The earliest philosophers were in Egypt and India. The *Brahmins* are the Hindoos of the highest or priestly caste, the spiritual philosophers. *Pythagoras*, a famous Greek philosopher, founded a school of philosophy at Crotona. *Plato* founded the school of the "Academy," and repre-

mins to that of Pythagoras, of Plato, of Bacon, of Leibnitz, of Swedenborg. There sits the Sphinx[1] at the road-side, and from age to age, as each prophet comes by, he tries his fortune at reading her riddle. There seems to be a necessity in spirit to manifest itself in material forms; and day and night, river and storm, beast and bird, acid and alkali, pre-exist in necessary Ideas in the mind of God, and are what they are by virtue of preceding affections in the world of spirit. A Fact is the end or last issue of spirit. The visible creation is the terminus or the circumference of the invisible world. "Material objects," said a French philosopher, "are necessarily kinds of *scoriæ* [2] of the substantial thoughts of the Creator, which must always preserve an exact relation to their first origin; in other words, visible nature must have a spiritual and moral side."

This doctrine is abstruse, and though the images of "garment," "scoriæ," "mirror," etc., may stimulate the fancy, we must summon the aid of subtler and more vital expositors to make it plain. "Every

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sents the finest achievements of Greek philosophy. *Leibnitz* (1646–1716), a German philosopher and mathematician, invented the differential calculus and evolved the doctrine of the monad to explain the living principle of the universe. *Swedenborg* (1688–1772), a Swedish philosopher, was the founder of the New Church. His theology was presented in the form of revelations or "visions" of a mystical character. See Emerson's "Representative Men."

1. Sphinx. According to Greek mythology, the Sphinx was a female monster who sat by the roadside and proposed a riddle to the Thebans who passed by, strangling those who could not guess it. At last Œdipus guessed the riddle, and, in accordance with the conditions, the monster killed herself.

2. Scoriæ. The plural of *scoria*. The cinder, slag, or volcanic rock thrown out by volcanic eruptions.

scripture is to be interpreted by the same spirit which gave it forth,"—is the fundamental law of criticism. A life in harmony with nature, the love of truth and of virtue, will purge the eyes to understand her text. By degrees we may come to know the primitive sense of the permanent objects of nature, so that the world shall be to us an open book, and every form significant of its hidden life and final cause.

A new interest surprises us, whilst, under the view now suggested, we contemplate the fearful extent and multitude of objects; since "every object rightly seen, unlocks a new faculty of the soul." That which was unconscious truth, becomes, when interpreted and defined in an object, a part of the domain of knowledge, —a new weapon in the magazine of power.

CHAPTER V

DISCIPLINE

In view of the significance of nature, we arrive at once at a new fact, that nature is a discipline. This use of the word includes the preceding uses, as parts of itself.

Space, time, society, labor, climate, food, locomotion, the animals, the mechanical forces, give us sincerest lessons, day by day, whose meaning is unlimited. They educate both the understanding and the reason. Every property of matter is a school for the understanding,—its solidity or resistance, its inertia, its extension, its figure, its divisibility. The understanding adds, divides, combines, measures, and finds nutriment and room for its activity in this worthy scene. Meantime, Reason transfers all these lessons

into its own world of thought, by perceiving the analogy that marries Matter and Mind.

1. Nature is a discipline of the understanding in intellectual truths. Our dealing with sensible objects is a constant exercise in the necessary lessons of difference, of likeness, of order, of being and seeming, of progressive arrangement; of ascent from particular to general; of combination to one end of manifold forces. Proportioned to the importance of the organ to be formed, is the extreme care with which its tuition is provided,—a care pretermitted in no single case. What tedious training, day after day, year after year, never ending, to form the common sense; what continual reproduction of annoyances, inconveniences, dilemmas; what rejoicing over us of little men; what disputing of prices, what reckonings of interest,—and all to form the hand of the mind;—to instruct us that "good thoughts are no better than good dreams, unless they be executed!"

The same good office is performed by property and its filial systems of debt and credit. Debt, grinding debt, whose iron face the widow, the orphan, and the sons of genius fear and hate;—debt, which consumes so much time, which so cripples and disheartens a great spirit with cares that seem so base, is a preceptor whose lessons cannot be foregone, and is needed most by those who suffer from it most. Moreover, property, which has been well compared to snow,—"if it fall level to-day, it will be blown into drifts to-morrow," —is the surface action of internal machinery, like the index on the face of a clock. Whilst now it is the gymnastics of the understanding, it is hiving, in the foresight of the spirit, experience in profounder laws.

The whole character and fortune of the individual are affected by the least inequalities in the culture of the understanding; for example, in the perception of differences. Therefore is Space, and therefore Time, that man may know that things are not huddled and lumped, but sundered and individual. A bell and a plow have each their use, and neither can do the office of the other. Water is good to drink, coal to burn, wool to wear; but wool cannot be drunk, nor water spun, nor coal eaten. The wise man shows his wisdom in separation, in gradation, and his scale of creatures and of merits is as wide as nature. The foolish have no range in their scale, but suppose every man is as every other man. What is not good they call the worst, and what is not hateful, they call the best.

In like manner, what good heed nature forms in us! She pardons no mistakes. Her yea is yea, and her nay, nay.

The first steps in agriculture, astronomy, zoölogy (those first steps which the farmer, the hunter, and the sailor take), teach that nature's dice [1] are always loaded; that in her heaps and rubbish are concealed sure and useful results.

How calmly and genially the mind apprehends one after another the laws of physics! What noble emotions dilate the mortal as he enters into the counsels of the creation, and feels by knowledge the privilege to Be! His insight refines him. The beauty of nature shines in his own breast. Man is greater that he can

1. Dice. Loaded dice are dice that have one face made heavier than the others, so that when shaken they will always fall as desired by the dishonest player.

see this, and the universe less, because time and space relations vanish as laws are known.

Here again we are impressed and even daunted by the immense universe to be explored. "What we know is a point to what we do not know." Open any recent journal of science, and weigh the problems suggested concerning light, heat, electricity, magnetism, physiology, geology, and judge whether the interest of natural science is likely to be soon exhausted.

Passing by many particulars of the discipline of nature, we must not omit to specify two.

The exercise of the will, or the lesson of power, is taught in every event. From the child's successive possession of his several senses up to the hour when he saith, "Thy will be done!" he is learning the secret that he can reduce under his will, not only particular events but great classes, nay, the whole series of events, and so conform all facts to his character. Nature is thoroughly mediate.[1] It is made to serve. It receives the dominion of man as meekly as the ass on which the Saviour rode. It offers all its kingdoms to man as the raw material which he may mold into what is useful. Man is never weary of working it up. He forges the subtile and delicate air into wise and melodious words, and gives them wing as angels of persuasion and command. One after another his victorious thought comes up with and reduces all things, until the world becomes at last only a realized will,—the double of the man.

2. Sensible objects conform to the premonitions of reason and reflect the conscience. All things are

1. Mediate. That which is used as a means or medium; not immediate, direct, or final.

moral; and in their boundless changes have an unceasing reference to spiritual nature. Therefore is nature glorious with form, color, and motion; that every globe in the remotest heaven, every chemical change from the rudest crystal up to the laws of life, every change of vegetation from the first principle of growth in the eye of a leaf, to the tropical forest and antediluvian coal-mine, every animal function from the sponge up to Hercules, shall hint or thunder to man the laws of right and wrong, and echo the Ten Commandments. Therefore is nature ever the ally of religion: lends all her pomp and riches to the religious sentiment. Prophet and priest, David, Isaiah, Jesus, have drawn deeply from this source. This ethical character so penetrates the bone and marrow of nature, as to seem the end for which it was made. Whatever private purpose is answered by any member or part, this is its public and universal function, and is never omitted. Nothing in nature is exhausted in its first use. When a thing has served an end to the uttermost, it is wholly new for an ulterior service. In God, every end is converted into a new means. Thus the use of commodity, regarded by itself, is mean and squalid. But it is to the mind an education in the doctrine of use, namely, that a thing is good only so far as it serves; that a conspiring of parts and efforts to the production of an end is essential to any being. The first and gross manifestation of this truth is our inevitable and hated training in values and wants, in corn [1] and meat.

It has already been illustrated, that every natural process is a version of a moral sentence. The moral

1. Corn. Used here in the old sense of *grain*.

law lies at the center of nature and radiates to the circumference. It is the pith and marrow of every substance, every relation, and every process. All things with which we deal, preach to us. What is a farm but a mute gospel? The chaff and the wheat, weeds and plants, blight, rain, insects, sun,—it is a sacred emblem from the first furrow of spring to the last stack which the snow of winter overtakes in the fields. But the sailor, the shepherd, the miner, the merchant, in their several resorts, have each an experience precisely parallel, and leading to the same conclusion: because all organizations are radically alike. Nor can it be doubted that this moral sentiment which thus scents the air, grows in the grain, and impregnates the waters of the world, is caught by man and sinks into his soul. The moral influence of nature upon every individual is that amount of truth which it illustrates to him. Who can estimate this? Who can guess how much firmness the sea-beaten rock has taught the fisherman? how much tranquillity has been reflected to man from the azure sky, over whose unspotted deeps the winds forevermore drive flocks of stormy clouds, and leave no wrinkle or stain? how much industry and providence and affection we have caught from the pantomime of brutes? What a searching preacher of self-command is the varying phenomenon of health!

Herein is especially apprehended the unity of nature,—the unity in variety,—which meets us everywhere. All the endless variety of things make an identical impression. Xenophanes [1] complained in his

1. **Xenophanes.** A distinguished Greek philosopher, founder of the Eleatic school, and author of a didactic poem "On Nature."

old age, that, look where he would, all things hastened back to unity. He was weary of seeing the same entity in the tedious variety of forms. The fable of Proteus [1] has a cordial truth. A leaf, a drop, a crystal, a moment of time, is related to the whole, and partakes of the perfection of the whole. Each particle is a microcosm, and faithfully renders the likeness of the world.

Not only resemblances exist in things whose analogy is obvious, as when we detect the type of the human hand in the flipper of the fossil saurus, but also in objects wherein there is great superficial unlikeness. Thus architecture is called "frozen music," [2] by De Staël and Goethe. Vitruvius [3] thought an architect should be a musician. "A Gothic church," said Coleridge, "is a petrified religion." Michael Angelo maintained, that, to an architect, a knowledge of anatomy is essential. In Haydn's [4] oratorios, the notes present to the imagination not only motions, as of the snake, the stag, and the elephant, but colors also; as the green grass. The law of harmonic sounds reap-

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1. **Proteus.** A character in classic mythology who had the power of assuming different shapes; hence the adjective *protean*, exceedingly variable.

2. **Frozen music.** This happy phrase is attributed also to Schlegel and Schelling. *Madame de Staël* (1766–1817) was a brilliant Frenchwoman, author of "Corinne" and "L'Allemagne." *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe* (1749–1832), the greatest German author, wrote "Faust," "Iphigenie," "Hermann und Dorothea," and other celebrated works.

3. **Vitruvius.** A famous Roman architect and military engineer under Cæsar and Augustus, the author of an important treatise, "De Architectura."

4. **Haydn.** A great Austrian composer (1732–1809), whose most celebrated composition is the "Creation."

pears in the harmonic colors. The granite is differenced in its laws only by the more or less of heat from the river that wears it away. The river, as it flows, resembles the air that flows over it; the air resembles the light which traverses it with more subtile currents; the light resembles the heat which rides with it through space. Each creature is only a modification of the other;[1] the likeness in them is more than the difference, and their radical law is one and the same. A rule of one art, or a law of one organization, holds true throughout nature. So intimate is this unity, that, it is easily seen, it lies under the undermost garment of nature, and betrays its source in universal spirit. For it pervades thought also. Every universal truth which we express in words, implies or supposes every other truth. "Omne verum vero consonat."[2] It is like a great circle on a sphere, comprising all possible circles; which, however, may be drawn and comprise it in like manner. Every such truth is the absolute ens[3] seen from one side. But it has innumerable sides.

The central unity is still more conspicuous in actions. Words are finite organs of the infinite mind. They cannot cover the dimensions of what is in truth. They break, chop, and impoverish it. An action is the perfection and publication of thought. A right action seems to fill the eye, and to be related to all nature. "The wise man, in doing one thing, does all;

1. Each creature, etc. This idea has been scientifically worked out in more recent times as the "Correlation of energies or forces."

2. "Omne verum vero consonat." All truth agrees with truth.

3. Ens. An existing object or concrete thing. Distinguished from the abstract *entity*, existence. Both are from the root forms of *esse*, to be.

or, in the one thing he does rightly, he sees the likeness of all which is done rightly."

Words and actions are not the attributes of brute nature. They introduce us to the human form, of which all other organizations appear to be degradations. When this appears among so many that surround it, the spirit prefers it to all others. It says, "From such as this have I drawn joy and knowledge; in such as this have I found and beheld myself; I will speak to it; it can speak again; it can yield me thought already formed and alive." In fact, the eye,—the mind,—is always accompanied by these forms, male and female; and these are incomparably the richest informations of the power and order that lie at the heart of things. Unfortunately every one of them bears the marks as of some injury; is marred and superficially defective. Nevertheless, far different from the deaf and dumb nature around them, these all rest like fountain-pipes on the unfathomed sea of thought and virtue whereto they alone, of all organizations, are the entrances.

It were a pleasant inquiry to follow into detail their ministry to our education, but where would it stop? We are associated in adolescent and adult life with some friends, who, like skies and waters, are coextensive with our idea; who, answering each to a certain affection of the soul, satisfy our desire on that side; whom we lack power to put at such focal distance from us, that we can mend or even analyze them. We cannot choose but love them. When much intercourse with a friend has supplied us with a standard of excellence, and has increased our respect for the resources of God who thus sends a real person to outgo our ideal; when he has, moreover, become an

object of thought, and, whilst his character retains all its unconscious effect, is converted in the mind into solid and sweet wisdom,—it is a sign to us that his office is closing, and he is commonly withdrawn from our sight in a short time.

CHAPTER VI

IDEALISM

Thus is the unspeakable but intelligible and practicable meaning of the world conveyed to man, the immortal pupil, in every object of sense. To this one end of discipline, all parts of nature conspire.

A noble doubt perpetually suggests itself,—whether this end be not the final cause of the universe; and whether nature outwardly exists. It is a sufficient account of that appearance we call the world, that God will teach a human mind, and so makes it the receiver of a certain number of congruent sensations, which we call sun and moon, man and woman, house and trade. In my utter impotence to test the authenticity of the report of my senses, to know whether the impressions they make on me correspond with outlying objects, what difference does it make, whether Orion [1] is up there in heaven, or some god paints the image in the firmament of the soul? The relations of parts and the end of the whole remaining the same, what is the difference, whether land and sea interact, and worlds revolve and intermingle without number or

1. Orion. A constellation represented by the giant hunter of Greek mythology. It consists of seven very bright stars, four forming a quadrangle and three in the middle forming the "belt."

end,—deep yawning under deep, and galaxy balancing galaxy, throughout absolute space,—or whether, without relations of time and space, the same appearances are inscribed in the constant faith of man? Whether nature enjoy a substantial existence without, or is only in the apocalypse of the mind, it is alike useful and alike venerable to me. Be it what it may, it is ideal to me so long as I cannot try the accuracy of my senses.

The frivolous make themselves merry with the Ideal theory,[1] as if its consequences were burlesque; as if it affected the stability of nature. It surely does not. God never jests with us, and will not compromise the end of nature by permitting any inconsequence in its procession. Any distrust of the permanence of laws would paralyze the faculties of man. Their permanence is sacredly respected, and his faith therein is perfect. The wheels and springs of man are all set to the hypothesis of the permanence of nature. We are not built like a ship to be tossed, but like a house to stand. It is a natural consequence of this structure, that so long as the active powers predominate over the

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1. **Ideal theory.** This refers to the Idealism of Bishop Berkeley, which is defined as "the doctrine that the souls of men and of God, and the ideas in them, are the only existences, and that the reality of external things consists only in their permanence and coherency."

Dr. Johnson's refutation of this theory is famous, as given by Boswell: "We stood talking for some time together of Bishop Berkeley's ingenious sophistry to prove the non-existence of matter, and that everything in the universe is merely ideal. I observed that, though we are satisfied this doctrine is not true, it is impossible to refute it. I never shall forget the alacrity with which Johnson answered, striking his foot with mighty force against a large stone, till he rebounded from it—'I refute it *thus*.'"

reflective, we resist with indignation any hint that nature is more short-lived or mutable than spirit. The broker, the wheelright, the carpenter, the tollman, are much displeased at the intimation.

But whilst we acquiesce entirely in the permanence of natural laws, the question of the absolute existence of nature still remains open. It is the uniform effect of culture on the human mind, not to shake our faith in the stability of particular phenomena, as of heat, water, azote;[1] but to lead us to regard nature as phenomenon, not a substance; to attribute necessary existence to spirit; to esteem nature as an accident and an effect.

To the senses and the unrenewed understanding, belongs a sort of instinctive belief in the absolute existence of nature. In their view man and nature are indissolubly joined. Things are ultimates, and they never look beyond their sphere. The presence of reason mars this faith. The first effort of thought tends to relax this despotism of the senses which binds us to nature as if we were a part of it, and shows us nature aloof, and, as it were, afloat. Until this higher agency intervenes, the animal eye sees, with wonderful accuracy, sharp outlines and colored surfaces. When the eye of reason opens, to outline and surface are at once added grace and expression. These proceed from imagination and affection, and abate somewhat of the angular distinctness of objects. If the reason be stimulated to more earnest vision, outlines and surfaces become transparent, and are no longer seen; causes and spirits are seen through them. The best moments of life are these delicious awaken-

1. Azote. An old name for nitrogen.

ings of the higher powers, and the reverential withdrawing of nature before its God.

Let us proceed to indicate the effects of culture. 1. Our first institution[1] in the Ideal philosophy is a hint from nature herself.

Nature is made to conspire with spirit to emancipate us. Certain mechanical changes, a small alteration in our local position, apprises us of a dualism. We are strangely affected by seeing the shore from a moving ship, from a balloon, or through the tints of an unusual sky. The least change in our point of view gives the whole world a pictorial air. A man who seldom rides, needs only to get into a coach and traverse his own town, to turn the street into a puppet-show. The men, the women,—talking, running, bartering, fighting,—the earnest mechanic, the lounger, the beggar, the boys, the dogs, are unrealized at once, or, at least, wholly detached from all relation to the observer, and seen as apparent, not substantial beings. What new thoughts are suggested by seeing a face of country quite familiar, in the rapid movement of the railroad car! Nay, the most wonted objects, (make a very slight change in the point of vision,) please us most. In a camera obscura, the butcher's cart, and the figure of one of our own family amuse us. So a portrait of a well-known face gratifies us. Turn the eyes upside down, by looking at the landscape through your legs, and how agreeable is the picture, though you have seen it any time these twenty years!

In these cases, by mechanical means, is suggested the difference between the observer and the spectacle, —between man and nature. Hence arises a pleasure

1. Institution. Fundamental or established principle.

mixed with awe; I may say, a low degree of the sublime is felt, from the fact, probably, that man is hereby apprised that whilst the world is a spectacle, something in himself is stable.

2. In a higher manner the poet communicates the same pleasure. By a few strokes he delineates, as on air, the sun, the mountain, the camp, the city, the hero, the maiden, not different from what we know them, but only lifted from the ground and afloat before the eye. He unfixes the land and the sea, makes them revolve around the axis of his primary thought, and disposes them anew. Possessed himself by a heroic passion, he uses matter as symbols of it. The sensual man conforms thoughts to things; the poet conforms things to his thoughts. The one esteems nature as rooted and fast; the other, as fluid, and impresses his being thereon. To him, the refractory world is ductile and flexible; he invests dust and stones with humanity, and makes them the words of the reason. The imagination may be defined to be the use which the reason makes of the material world. Shakspere possesses the power of subordinating nature for the purposes of expression, beyond all poets. His imperial muse tosses the creation like a bauble from hand to hand, and uses it to embody any caprice of thought that is uppermost in his mind. The remotest spaces of nature are visited, and the farthest sundered things are brought together, by a subtile spiritual connection. We are made aware that magnitude of material things is relative, and all objects shrink and expand to serve the passion of the poet. Thus in his sonnets, the lays of birds, the scents and dyes of flowers he finds to be the shadow of his beloved; time, which keeps her from

him, is his chest; the suspicion she has awakened, is her ornament;

> The ornament of beauty is Suspect,
> A crow which flies in heaven's sweetest air.[1]

His passion is not the fruit of chance; it swells, as he speaks, to a city, or a state.

> No, it was builded far from accident;
> It suffers not in smiling pomp, nor falls
> Under the brow of thralling discontent;
> It fears not policy, that heretic,
> That works on leases of short numbered hours,
> But all alone stands hugely politic.

In the strength of his constancy, the Pyramids seem to him recent and transitory. The freshness of youth and love dazzles him with its resemblance to morning;

> Take those lips away
> Which so sweetly were forsworn;
> And those eyes,—the break of day,
> Lights that do mislead the morn.[2]

The wild beauty of this hyperbole, I may say in passing, it would not be easy to match in literature.

This transfiguration which all material objects undergo through the passion of the poet,—this power which he exerts to dwarf the great, to magnify the small,—might be illustrated by a thousand examples from his plays. I have before me The Tempest, and will cite only these few lines.

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1. "The ornament of beauty," etc. From Sonnet 70. The quotation following is from Sonnet 124.

2. "Take those lips," etc. This song, beginning:

> "Take, oh take, those lips away,"

is in "Measure for Measure," Act IV. sc. 1. It occurs also in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Bloody Brother," Act V., with a pretty additional stanza.

ARIEL. The strong based promontory
Have I made shake, and by the spurs plucked up
The pine and cedar.

Prospero calls for music to soothe the frantic Alonzo, and his companions;

A solemn air, and the best comforter
To an unsettled fancy, cure thy brains
Now useless, boiled within thy skull.

Again;

The charm dissolves apace,
And, as the morning steals upon the night,
Melting the darkness, so their rising senses
Begin to chase the ignorant fumes that mantle
Their clearer reason.
Their understanding
Begins to swell: and the approaching tide
Will shortly fill the reasonable shores
That now lie foul and muddy.

The perception of real affinities between events (that is to say, of ideal affinities, for those only are real), enables the poet thus to make free with the most imposing forms and phenomena of the world, and to assert the predominance of the soul.

3. Whilst thus the poet animates nature with his own thoughts, he differs from the philosopher only herein, that the one proposes beauty as his main end; the other truth. But the philosopher, not less than the poet, postpones the apparent order and relations of things to the empire of thought. "The problem of philosophy," according to Plato, "is, for all that exists conditionally, to find a ground unconditioned and absolute." It proceeds on the faith that a law determines all phenomena, which being known, the phenomena can be predicted. That law, when in the mind, is an idea. Its beauty is infinite. The true

philosopher and the true poet are one, and a beauty, which is truth,[1] and a truth, which is beauty, is the aim of both. Is not the charm of one of Plato's or Aristotle's definitions strictly like that of the Antigone[2] of Sophocles? It is, in both cases, that a spiritual life has been imparted to nature; that the solid seeming block of matter has been pervaded and dissolved by a thought; that this feeble human being has penetrated the vast masses of nature with an informing soul, and recognized itself in their harmony, that is, seized their law. In physics, when this is attained, the memory disburdens itself of its cumbrous catalogues of particulars, and carries centuries of observation in a single formula.

Thus even in physics, the material is degraded before the spiritual. The astronomer, the geometer, rely on their irrefragable analysis, and disdain the results of observation. The sublime remark of Euler[3] on his law of arches, "This will be found contrary to all experience, yet is true;" had already transferred nature into the mind, and left matter like an outcast corpse.

4. Intellectual science has been observed to beget invariably a doubt of the existence of matter. Turgot[4]

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1. **Beauty, which is truth.** Compare Keats's lines, in "Ode on a Grecian Urn":

> "Beauty is truth, truth beauty—that is all
> Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

2. **Antigone.** One of the splendid tragedies of the Greek dramatic poet Sophocles.

3. **Euler.** A celebrated Swiss mathematician (1707–1783), who did much of his work after being stricken blind. His most famous works are "Letters to a German Princess," covering a large variety of scientific topics, and an "Introduction to Algebra."

4. **Turgot.** A French statesman, political economist, and financier (1727–1781). He was minister of finance under Louis XVI.

said, "He that has never doubted the existence of matter, may be assured he has no aptitude for metaphysical inquiries." It fastens the attention upon immortal necessary uncreated natures, that is, upon ideas; and in their presence we feel that the outward circumstance is a dream and a shade. Whilst we wait in this Olympus of gods, we think of nature as an appendix to the soul. We ascend into their region, and know that these are the thoughts of the Supreme Being. "These are they [1] who were set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When he prepared the heavens, they were there; when he established the clouds above, when he strengthened the fountains of the deep. Then they were by him, as one brought up with him. Of them took he counsel."

Their influence is proportionate. As objects of science they are accessible to few men. Yet all men are capable of being raised by piety or by passion, into their region. And no man touches these divine natures, without becoming, in some degree, himself divine. Like a new soul, they renew the body. We become physically nimble and lightsome; we tread on air; life is no longer irksome, and we think it will never be so. No man fears age or misfortune or death in their serene company, for he is transported out of the district of change. Whilst we behold unveiled the nature of justice and truth, we learn the difference between the absolute and the conditional or relative.

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and attempted reforms in methods of taxation, which displeased the aristocracy and led to his dismissal.

1. "These are they," etc. An adaptation of "Proverbs" viii. 23–30.

We apprehend the absolute. As it were, for the first time, we exist. We become immortal, for we learn that time and space are relations of matter; that with a perception of truth or a virtuous will they have no affinity.

5. Finally, religion and ethics,[1] which may be fitly called the practice of ideas, or the introduction of ideas into life, have an analogous effect with all lower culture, in degrading nature and suggesting its dependence on spirit. Ethics and religion differ herein; that the one is the system of human duties commencing from man; the other, from God. Religion includes the personality of God; ethics does not. They are one to our present design. They both put nature under foot. The first and last lesson of religion is, "The things that are seen, are temporal; the things that are unseen, are eternal." [2] It puts an affront upon nature. It does that for the unschooled, which philosophy does for Berkeley and Viasa.[3] The uniform language that may be heard in the churches of the most ignorant sects is,—"Contemn the unsubstantial shows of the world; they are vanities, dreams, shadows, unrealities; seek the realities of religion." The devotee flouts nature. Some theosophists have arrived at a certain hostility and indignation towards matter,

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1. Ethics. The science that treats of the nature and grounds of moral obligation, and of the rules that ought to determine conduct in accordance with this obligation, especially with respect to the rights of others.

2. "The things that are seen," etc. See "2 Corinthians" iv. 18.

3. Viasa. More generally, *Vyasa*. A Hindoo sage or saint, who is supposed to have been the original compiler of the Vedas, the sacred books of India.

as the Manichean [1] and Plotinus.[2] They distrusted in themselves any looking back to these flesh-pots of Egypt.[3] Plotinus was ashamed of his body. In short, they might all say of matter, what Michael Angelo said of external beauty, "It is the frail and weary weed, in which God dresses the soul which he has called into time."

It appears that motion, poetry, physical and intellectual science, and religion, all tend to affect our convictions of the reality of the external world. But I own there is something ungrateful in expanding too curiously the particulars of the general proposition, that all culture tends to imbue us with idealism. I have no hostility to nature, but a child's love to it. I expand and live in the warm day like corn and melons. Let us speak her fair. I do not wish to fling stones at my beautiful mother, nor soil my gentle nest. I only wish to indicate the true position of nature in regard to man, wherein to establish man all right education tends; as the ground which to attain is the object of human life, that is, of man's connection with nature. Culture inverts the vulgar views of nature, and brings the mind to call that apparent

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1. **Manichean.** A follower of Mani, the traditional founder of Manicheism in Persia, the central doctrine of which is that there are two supreme principles: light, the source of all good, and darkness, the source of all evil. In the visible world both are mingled.

2. **Plotinus.** A Neo-Platonic philosopher, born about 204 A. D. His works were entitled "Enneads." When asked to have his portrait drawn, he replied: "Is it not enough to drag after us wheresoever we go that image in which nature has shut us up? Do you think that we should likewise transmit to future ages an image of that image as a sight worthy of their admiration?"

3. **Flesh-pots of Egypt.** This familiar allusion is from "Exodus" xvi. 3.

which it uses to call [1] real, and that real which it uses to call visionary. Children, it is true, believe in the external world. The belief that it appears only, is an afterthought, but with culture this faith will as surely arise on the mind as did the first.

The advantage of the ideal theory over the popular faith is this, that it presents the world in precisely that view which is most desirable to the mind. It is, in fact, the view which reason, both speculative and practical, that is, philosophy and virtue, take. For, seen in the light of thought, the world always is phenomenal; and virtue subordinates it to the mind. Idealism sees the world in God. It beholds the whole circle of persons and things, of actions and events, of country and religion, not as painfully accumulated, atom after atom, act after act, in an aged creeping past, but as one vast picture which God paints on the instant eternity for the contemplation of the soul. Therefore the soul holds itself off from a too trivial and microscopic study of the universal tablet. It respects the end too much to immerse itself in the means. It sees something more important in Christianity than the scandals of ecclesiastical history or the niceties of criticism; and, very incurious concerning persons or miracles, and not at all disturbed by chasms of historical evidence, it accepts from God the phenomenon, as it finds it, as the pure and awful form of religion in the world. It is not hot and passionate at the appearance of what it calls its own good or bad fortune, at the union or opposition of other persons. No man

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1. **Uses to call.** Is accustomed to call. Hardly a warrantable use of this verb in the present tense.

is its enemy. It accepts whatsoever befalls, as part of its lesson. It is a watcher more than a doer, and it is a doer, only that it may the better watch.

CHAPTER VII

SPIRIT

It is essential to a true theory of nature and of man, that it should contain somewhat progressive. Uses that are exhausted or that may be, and facts that end in the statement, cannot be all that is true of this brave lodging wherein man is harbored, and wherein all his faculties find appropriate and endless exercise. And all the uses of nature admit of being summed in one, which yields the activity of man an infinite scope. Through all its kingdoms, to the suburbs and outskirts of things, it is faithful to the cause whence it had its origin. It always speaks of spirit. It suggests the absolute. It is a perpetual effect. It is a great shadow pointing always to the sun behind us.

The aspect of nature is devout. Like the figure of Jesus, she stands with bended head, and hands folded upon the breast. The happiest man is he who learns from nature the lesson of worship.

Of that ineffable essence which we call spirit, he that thinks most, will say least. We can foresee God in the coarse, and, as it were, distant phenomena of matter; but when we try to define and describe himself, both language and thought desert us, and we are as helpless as fools and savages. That essence refuses to be recorded in propositions, but when man has worshiped him intellectually, the noblest ministry of nature is to stand as the apparition of God. It is the

organ through which the universal spirit speaks to the individual, and strives to lead back the individual to it.

When we consider spirit, we see that the views already presented do not include the whole circumference of man. We must add some related thoughts.

Three problems are put by nature to the mind; What is matter? Whence is it? and Whereto? The first of these questions only, the ideal theory answers. Idealism saith: matter is a phenomenon, not a substance. Idealism acquaints us with the total disparity between the evidence of our own being and the evidence of the world's being. The one is perfect; the other, incapable of any assurance; the mind is a part of the nature of things; the world is a divine dream, from which we may presently awake to the glories and certainties of day. Idealism is a hypothesis to account for nature by other principles than those of carpentry and chemistry. Yet, if it only deny the existence of matter, it does not satisfy the demands of the spirit. It leaves God out of me. It leaves me in the splendid labyrinth of my perceptions, to wander without end. Then the heart resists it, because it balks the affections in denying substantive being to men and women. Nature is so pervaded with human life that there is something of humanity in all and in every particular. But this theory makes nature foreign to me, and does not account for that consanguinity which we acknowledge to it.

Let it stand then, in the present state of our knowledge, merely as a useful introductory hypothesis, serving to apprise us of the eternal distinction between the soul and the world.

But when, following the invisible steps of thought,

we come to inquire, Whence is matter? and Whereto? many truths arise to us out of the recesses of consciousness. We learn that the highest is present to the soul of man; that the dread universal essence, which is not wisdom, or love, or beauty, or power, but all in one, and each entirely, is that for which all things exist, and that by which they are; that spirit creates; that behind nature, throughout nature, spirit is present; one and not compound it does not act upon us from without, that is, in space and time, but spiritually, or through ourselves: therefore, that spirit, that is, the Supreme Being, does not build up nature around us but puts it forth through us, as the life of the tree puts forth new branches and leaves through the pores of the old. As a plant upon the earth, so a man rests upon the bosom of God; he is nourished by unfailing fountains, and draws at his need inexhaustible power. Who can set bounds to the possibilities of man? Once inhale the upper air, being admitted to behold the absolute natures of justice and truth, and we learn that man has access to the entire mind of the Creator, is himself the creator in the finite. This view, which admonishes me where the sources of wisdom and power lie, and points to virtue as to

> The golden key
> Which opes the palace of eternity,[1]

carries upon its face the highest certificate of truth, because it animates me to create my own world through the purification of my soul.

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1. "The golden key," etc. Milton's "Comus," l. 13. It should read:

> "That golden key
> That opes the palace of eternity."

The world proceeds from the same spirit as the body of man. It is a remoter and inferior incarnation of God, a projection of God in the unconscious. But it differs from the body in one important respect. It is not, like that, now subjected to the human will. Its serene order is inviolable by us. It is, therefore, to us, the present expositor of the divine mind. It is a fixed point whereby we may measure our departure. As we degenerate, the contrast between us and our house is more evident. We are as much strangers in nature as we are aliens from God. We do not understand the notes of birds. The fox and the deer run away from us; the bear and tiger rend us. We do not know the uses of more than a few plants, as corn and the apple, the potato and the vine. Is not the landscape, every glimpse of which hath a grandeur, a face of Him? Yet this may show us what discord is between man and nature, for you cannot freely admire a noble landscape if laborers are digging in the field hard by. The poet finds something ridiculous in his delight until he is out of the sight of men.

CHAPTER VIII

PROSPECTS

In inquiries respecting the laws of the world and the frame of things, the highest reason is always the truest. That which seems faintly possible, it is so refined, is often faint and dim because it is deepest seated in the mind among the eternal verities. Empirical science is apt to cloud the sight, and by the very knowledge of functions and processes to bereave the student of the manly contemplation of the whole.

The savant becomes unpoetic.[1] But the best read naturalist who lends an entire and devout attention to truth, will see that there remains much to learn of his relation to the world, and that it is not to be learned by any addition or subtraction or other comparison of known quantites, but is arrived at by untaught sallies of the spirit, by a continual self-recovery, and by entire humility. He will perceive that there are far more excellent qualities in the student than preciseness and infallibility; that a guess is often more fruitful than an indisputable affirmation, and that a dream may let us deeper into the secret of nature than a hundred concerted experiments.

For the problems to be solved are precisely those which the physiologist and the naturalist omit to state. It is not so pertinent to man to know all the individuals of the animal kingdom, as it is to know whence and whereto is this tyrannizing unity in his constitution, which evermore separates and classifies things, endeavoring to reduce the most diverse to one form. When I behold a rich landscape, it is less to my purpose to recite correctly the order and superposition of the strata,[2] than to know why all thought

1. **The savant becomes unpoetic.** Darwin says in his Autobiography: "Now for many years I cannot endure to read a line of poetry. I have tried lately to read Shakespeare and found it so intolerably dull that it nauseated me. I have also almost lost my taste for pictures and music. . . My mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding general laws out of large collections of facts. But why this should have caused the atrophy of that part of the brain alone on which the higher tastes depend, I cannot conceive."

2. **Superposition of strata.** This is the language of geology—the order in which the strata or layers of the earth's crust are laid upon each other.

of multitude is lost in a tranquil sense of unity. I cannot greatly honor minuteness in details, so long as there is no hint to explain the relation between things and thoughts; no ray upon the metaphysics [1] of conchology, of botany, of the arts, to show the relation of the forms of flowers, shells, animals, architecture to the mind, and build science upon ideas. In a cabinet of natural history, we become sensible of a certain occult recognition and sympathy in regard to the most unwieldy and eccentric forms of beast, fish, and insect. The American who has been confined, in his own country, to the sight of buildings designed after foreign models, is surprised on entering York Minster [2] or St. Peter's at Rome, by the feeling that these structures are imitations also,—faint copies of an invisible archetype. Nor has science sufficient humanity, so long as the naturalist overlooks that wonderful congruity which subsists between man and the world; of which he is lord, not because he is the most subtile inhabitant, but because he is its head and heart, and finds something of himself in every great and small thing, in every mountain stratum, in every new law of color, fact of astronomy, or atmospheric influence which observation or analysis lay open. A perception of this mystery inspires the muse of George Herbert,[3]

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1. **Metaphysics.** This is abstract or speculative philosophy, as opposed to concrete or scientific knowledge. It is defined as "the science of the inward and essential nature of things"; also as "the science of the mind treated by means of introspection and analysis, and not by experiment and scientific observation."

2. **York Minster.** The grand cathedral at York, England. A cathedral church is called a minster (Latin *monasterium*) when it originated in a monastery.

3. **George Herbert** (1593-1633). An English poet, celebrated for

the beautiful psalmist of the seventeenth century. The following lines are part of his little poem on Man.

Man is all symmetry,
Full of proportions, one limb to another,
And to all the world besides.
Each part may call the farthest, brother;
For head with foot hath private amity,
And both with moons and tides.

Nothing hath got so far
But man hath caught and kept it as his prey;
His eyes dismount the highest star:
He is in little all the sphere.
Herbs gladly cure our flesh, because that they
Find their acquaintance there.

For us, the winds do blow,
The earth doth rest, heaven move, and fountains flow;
Nothing we see, but means our good,
As our delight, or as our treasure;
The whole is either our cupboard of food,
Or cabinet of pleasure.

The stars have us to bed:
Night draws the curtain; which the sun withdraws.
Music and light attend our head.
All things unto our flesh are kind,
In their descent and being; to our mind,
In their ascent and cause.

More servants wait on man
Than he'll take notice of. In every path,
He treads down that which doth befriend him
When sickness makes him pale and wan.
Oh mighty love! Man is one world, and hath
Another to attend him.

The perception of this class of truth makes the attraction which draws men to science, but the end is

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his beautiful religious poems, originally published under the title: "The Temple: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations."

lost sight of in attention to the means. In view of this half-sight of science, we accept the sentence of Plato, that "poetry comes nearer to vital truth than history." [1] Every surmise and vaticination of the mind is entitled to a certain respect, and we learn to prefer imperfect theories, and sentences which contain glimpses of truth, to digested systems which have no one valuable suggestion. A wise writer will feel that the ends of study and composition are best answered by announcing undiscovered regions of thought, and so communicating, through hope, new activity to the torpid spirit.

I shall therefore conclude this essay with some traditions of man and nature, which a certain poet sang to me; and which, as they have always been in the world, and perhaps reappear to every bard, may be both history and prophecy.

"The foundations of man are not in matter, but in spirit. But the element of spirit is eternity. To it, therefore, the longest series of events, the oldest chronologies are young and recent. In the cycle of the universal man, from whom the known individuals proceed, centuries are points, and all history is but the epoch of one degradation.

"We distrust and deny inwardly our sympathy with nature. We own and disown our relation to it, by turns. We are like Nebuchadnezzar, dethroned, bereft

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1. "Poetry comes nearer to vital truth," etc. Mrs. Browning, in "Aurora Leigh," calls the poets:

> "The only truth-tellers now left to God,
> The only speakers of essential truth
> Opposed to relative, comparative,
> And temporal truths."

of reason, and eating grass like an ox. But who can set limits to the remedial force of spirit?

"A man is a god in ruins. When men are innocent, life shall be longer, and shall pass into the immortal as gently as we awake from dreams. Now, the world would be insane and rabid, if these disorganizations should last for hundreds of years. It is kept in check by death and infancy. Infancy is the perpetual Messiah, which comes into the arms of fallen men, and pleads with them to return to paradise.

"Man is the dwarf of himself. Once he was permeated and dissolved by spirit. He filled nature with his overflowing currents. Out from him sprang the sun and moon; from man the sun, from woman the moon. The laws of his mind, the periods of his actions externized themselves into day and night, into the year and the seasons. But, having made for himself this huge shell, his waters retired; he no longer fills the veins and veinlets; he is shrunk to a drop. He sees that the structure still fits him, but fits him colossally. Say, rather, once it fitted him, now it corresponds to him from far and on high. He adores timidly his own work. Now is man the follower of the sun, and woman the follower of the moon. Yet sometimes he starts in his slumber, and wonders at himself and his house, and muses strangely at the resemblance betwixt him and it. He perceives that if his law is still paramount, if still he have elemental power, if his word is sterling yet in nature, it is not conscious power, it is not inferior but superior to his will. It is instinct." Thus my Orphic poet [1] sang.

1. **Orphic poet.** Orpheus was a semi-mythical or legendary Greek poet, whose music was so charming as to give him power

At present, man applies to nature but half his force. He works on the world with his understanding alone. He lives in it and masters it by a penny-wisdom; and he that works most in it is but a half-man, and whilst his arms are strong and his digestion good, his mind is imbruted, and he is a selfish savage. His relation to nature, his power over it, is through the understanding, as by manure; the economic use of fire, wind, water, and the mariner's needle; steam, coal, chemical agriculture; the repairs of the human body by the dentist and the surgeon. This is such a resumption of power as if a banished king should buy his territories inch by inch, instead of vaulting at once into his throne. Meantime, in the thick darkness, there are not wanting gleams of a better light,—occasional examples of the action of man upon nature with his entire force,—with reason as well as understanding. Such examples are, the traditions of miracles in the earliest antiquity of all nations; the history of Jesus Christ; the achievements of a principle, as in religious and political revolutions, and in the abolition of the slave-trade; the miracles of enthusiasm, as those reported of Swedenborg, Hohenlohe,[1] and the Shakers; [2] many obscure and yet contested facts, now arranged

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over all things, animate and inanimate, in Nature. There is a suggestion in this legend of the true nature poet of modern times; his loftiest inspiration comes from his intimate sympathy with nature. At the close of this essay, Emerson feels himself exalted by his noble theme to the attitude of an Orphic poet.

1. Hohenlohe. Leopold Alexander, Prince of Hohenlohe-Waldenburg-Schillingsfürst (1794–1849), a German Roman Catholic ecclesiastic, who practiced a form of prayer-cure.

2. Shakers. A religious sect, founded in Manchester, England, in the middle of the eighteenth century, popularly so named from the agitations or movements that form a part of their ceremonial.

under the name of Animal Magnetism;[1] prayer; eloquence; self-healing; and the wisdom of children. These are examples of reason's momentary grasp of the scepter; the exertions of a power which exists not in time or space, but an instantaneous in-streaming causing power. The difference between the actual and the ideal force of man is happily figured by the schoolmen, in saying, that the knowledge of man is an evening knowledge, *vespertina cognitio*, but that of God is a morning knowledge, *matutina cognitio.*

The problem of restoring to the world original and eternal beauty is solved by the redemption of the soul. The ruin or the blank that we see when we look at nature, is in our own eye. The axis of vision is not coincident with the axis of things, and so they appear not transparent but opaque. The reason why the world lacks unity, and lies broken and in heaps, is because man is disunited with himself. He cannot be a naturalist until he satisfies all the demands of the spirit. Love is as much its demand as perception. Indeed, neither can be perfect without the other. In the uttermost meaning of the words, thought is devout, and devotion is thought. Deep calls unto deep.[2] But in actual life, the marriage is not celebrated. There are innocent men who worship God after the tradition of their fathers, but their sense of duty has not yet extended to the use of all their faculties. And there are patient naturalists, but they freeze their sub-

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1. **Animal Magnetism.** This term was applied by Mesmer to the phenomena of mesmerism. Emerson would to-day, doubtless, have added here the term "Christian Science."

2. **Deep calls unto deep.** "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts."—"Psalms" xlii. 17.

ject under the wintry light of the understanding. Is not prayer also a study of truth,—a sally of the soul into the unfound infinite? No man ever prayed heartily without learning something. But when a faithful thinker, resolute to detach every object from personal relations and see it in the light of thought, shall, at the same time, kindle science with the fire of the holiest affections, then will God go forth anew into the creation.

It will not need, when the mind is prepared for study, to search for objects. The invariable mark of wisdom is to see the miraculous in the common. What is a day? What is a year? What is summer? What is woman? What is a child? What is sleep? To our blindness, these things seem unaffecting. We make fables to hide the baldness of the fact and conform it, as we say, to the higher law of the mind. But when the fact is seen under the light of an idea, the gaudy fable fades and shrivels. We behold the real higher law. To the wise, therefore, a fact is true poetry, and the most beautiful of fables. These wonders are brought to our own door. You also are a man. Man and woman and their social life, poverty, labor, sleep, fear, fortune, are known to you. Learn that none of these things is superficial, but that each phenomenon has its roots in the faculties and affections of the mind. Whilst the abstract question occupies your intellect, nature brings it in the concrete to be solved by your hands. It were a wise inquiry for the closet, to compare, point by point, especially at remarkable crises in life, our daily history with the rise and progress of ideas in the mind.

So shall we come to look at the world with new eyes.

It shall answer the endless inquiry of the intellect,—What is truth? and of the affections,—What is good? by yielding itself passive to the educated Will. Then shall come to pass what my poet said; "Nature is not fixed but fluid. Spirit alters, molds, makes it. The immobility or bruteness of nature is the absence of spirit; to pure spirit it is fluid, it is volatile, it is obedient. Every spirit builds itself a house and beyond its house a world and beyond its world a heaven. Know then that the world exists for you. For you is the phenomenon perfect. What we are, that only can we see. All that Adam had, all that Cæsar could, you have and can do. Adam called his house, heaven and earth; Cæsar called his house, Rome; you perhaps call yours, a cobbler's trade; a hundred acres of plowed land; or a scholar's garret. Yet line for line and point for point your dominion is as great as theirs, though without fine names. Build therefore your own world. As fast as you conform your life to the pure idea in your mind, that will unfold its great proportions. A correspondent revolution in things will attend the influx of the spirit. So fast will disagreeable appearances, swine, spiders, snakes, pests, mad-houses, prisons, enemies, vanish; they are temporary and shall be no more seen. The sordor and filths of nature, the sun shall dry up and the wind exhale. As when the summer comes from the south the snow-banks melt and the face of the earth becomes green before it, so shall the advancing spirit create its ornaments along its path, and carry with it the beauty it visits and the song which enchants it; it shall draw beautiful faces, warm hearts, wise discourse, and heroic acts, around its way, until evil is no more seen. The kingdom of man over

nature, which cometh not with observation,—a dominion such as now is beyond his dream of God,—he shall enter without more wonder than the blind man feels who is gradually restored to perfect sight."

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